



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

9094th meeting

Thursday, 14 July 2022, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
China	Mr. Dai Bing
France	Mr. Benaabou
Gabon	Ms. Koumby Missambo
Ghana	Mr. Boateng
India	Mr. Raguttahalli
Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya	Mr. Kimani
Mexico	Mr. Cisneros Chávez
Norway	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2022/513)

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22-42588 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2022/513)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Colombia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, and request the Protocol Officer to escort her to her seat at the Council table.

Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia; Mr. Francisco José de Roux Rengifo, President of the Truth Commission; and Ms. Jineith Casso Piamba, Nasa indigenous woman, community leader and human rights defender.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2022/513, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ruiz Massieu.

Mr. Ruiz Massieu: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to present the latest report of the Secretary-General on Colombia (S/2022/513) and to update the

Security Council on the important recent developments since its publication.

(spoke in Spanish)

It is a pleasure to be in the Security Council with Vice President and Foreign Minister Marta Lucía Ramírez. I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation once again to the Government of Colombia for supporting and cooperating with the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations in general. I welcome the participation in this meeting of Ms. Jineith Casso Piamba, a leader of the Nasa people of the Cauca department and representative of the Women's Network of the municipality of Caldonó. As the Council is well aware, indigenous women play a leading role in peacebuilding in the territories.

I am also very pleased to present this quarterly report in the presence of Father Francisco de Roux, President of the Truth Commission. I would like to take this opportunity to commend him and the other commissioners on their outstanding work over the past three years and the recent publication of their final report. And I want to echo the main message conveyed to the country through the presentation of this report, which is that only through truth can we build a better future for all Colombia.

(spoke in English)

Over the past few months, Colombians took part in a hard-fought political campaign that resulted in the election of President Gustavo Petro and Vice-President Francia Márquez, who will be sworn in on 7 August, and of a new Congress, which will be installed on 20 July. I would like to echo the Secretary-General's encouragement with regard to the mostly peaceful elections and take this opportunity to once again highlight the significant contribution that the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace has made to widening and deepening Colombian democracy.

The electoral outcomes are increasingly reflecting the diversity of the country's vibrant society. There are now more guarantees for the exercise of political opposition, and the voices of 16 representatives of victims from conflict-affected regions will be heard in Congress. Another factor that will make this Congress an unprecedented one is that it will include the largest-ever share of women lawmakers, close to 30 per cent of all of its members. Together with representatives from

UN-Women, I recently had an opportunity to meet with several of the newly elected women lawmakers, who expressed their clear determination to advance many issues in Congress, including the gender provisions of the peace agreement. We hope that the new Congress will make considerable progress in adopting the more than 30 pending peace-related norms, including on key matters such as comprehensive rural reform and guarantees for political participation.

Despite the reasons for optimism, we are also constantly reminded of the serious obstacles that remain on the path to consolidating peace. Chief among them is the persisting violence against communities, leaders and former combatants in several departments. It saddens me to have to inform the Council that another four former combatants have been killed since the publication of the Secretary-General's report two weeks ago. Among the victims was Ronald Rojas, also known as Ramiro Durán, a prominent leader of former combatants in the Huila department. Ramiro stood out for his commitment to peace since the onset of the process. After the laying down of arms, he became a leader of the reintegration process and an advocate for the implementation of the agreement more broadly, including as an active member until 2021 of the Commission for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement. Including those most recent deaths, the Mission has recorded the killings of 331 former combatants since the signing of the agreement. The security of living former combatants must be guaranteed. A priority for any peace agreement must be to safeguard the lives of those who have laid down their arms in good faith with assurances that they would be protected.

Illegal armed actors continue to target local leaders in conflict-affected areas marked by poverty, illicit economies and a limited State presence. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities are among those most seriously affected by the violence and insecurity. And while the full application of the ethnic provisions of the Final Agreement could help address the most urgent concerns, their implementation remains comparatively weak. The High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples created by the agreement has called for a dedicated follow-up on ethnic matters by international actors, and I fully endorse those recommendations.

Worrying information has recently come to light related to the alleged misuse of considerable resources from royalties from hydrocarbon exploitation

allocated for the implementation of projects within the development programmes with a territorial focus. Transparency in the use of precious funding for peace is vital and demands that the authorities thoroughly investigate any possible acts of corruption, and I trust that that will be the case.

(spoke in Spanish)

Despite the many challenges to the process, the developments in this reporting period also include inspiring progress. A few weeks ago, in a milestone of the utmost importance for peace in Colombia and the world, the Truth Commission published its final report, which is a comprehensive compilation of multiple voices and sectors throughout Colombian society in every part of the country. The report's painful findings have shed light on the causes and effects of the conflict, including the heartbreaking statistics reflecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of Colombians cut short over decades and the dynamics that explain the persistence of violence.

The report also leaves us with a wealth of recommendations for advancing peacebuilding and reconciliation as a national project, including a call on State entities to ensure full compliance with the Final Agreement. The historic first hearings of truth and acknowledgement of responsibility held by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace have also given voice to the representatives of hundreds of victims and their calls for justice and reparations. In line with its goal of ensuring reparations, the hearings also opened up a space for the victims and the world for the leaders of the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo, former members of the security forces, including high-ranking officers and civilian third parties to help acknowledge the truth and reinforce their commitment to ensuring that the past will not be repeated. Accordingly, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is also moving towards the imposition of its first sanctions.

For its part, the Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed Missing has continued its important work. Only a few days ago it located a father who was reunited with his two daughters and brought together two brothers who had been separated for decades. The Mission will continue to follow up duly on this issue and other efforts by all parties towards the shared goal of guaranteeing victims' rights to truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition.

(spoke in English)

As the incoming Administration prepares to take office, President-elect Petro has called for national unity and has expressed his intention to deepen the comprehensive implementation of the peace agreement, as well as to seek both political and judicial negotiated solutions with the remaining illegal armed actors in what he has called the quest for total peace. When I met with him two weeks ago, he strongly reaffirmed that peace would be a cornerstone of his Government and that he was counting on the support of the United Nations.

I also had the opportunity to meet with Vice-President-elect Francia Elena Márquez Mina, the first Afro-Colombian woman to hold that position, who also reiterated that peace, with a territorial and ethnic approach, would feature prominently in the Government's agenda.

Indeed, the incoming Administration has a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to accelerate the implementation of the peace agreement. There are very good reasons for optimism, and I believe that the United Nations and the international community at large should do all they can to lend their support.

The President: I thank Mr. Ruiz Massieu for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. De Roux Rengifo.

Mr. De Roux Rengifo: Allow me to salute three very significant persons before starting my briefing:

(spoke in Spanish)

Ms. Jineth Casso Piamba, representing the presence of our victims and our Afro-Colombian peoples; Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia; and Mr. Guillermo Roque Fernández De Soto Valderrama, our Ambassador to the United Nations.

A little more than two years ago, I stood before the members of the Security Council, when there was still no pandemic. The Security Council had already come to Colombia. Members had placed their trust in us. Today I return before the Council on the occasion of the quarterly report on the peace process in Colombia (S/2022/513), which the Head of Mission, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, just presented. I thank him for all that he has done to support us and everything he has given us. I have come to report that the task that the Council members unanimously supported is complete. Here is

the conclusion of that task, and Council members will receive a summary of that hereon.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Truth Commission, and reflecting the feelings of millions of Colombian men and women victims of the war, we bring a word of gratitude and thanks to all those present, as peoples gathered at the United Nations. It is a word of truth from Colombia, a message of pain and, at the same time, a courageous word, which shows, from the individual wounded by war and from the wounded society, a bold and obligatory path to build together a nation in peace out of our differences and a new world that fills with joy the children of today and tomorrow, where there is room for hope.

For four years, we have listened to the suffering that Colombia's internal war of more than 50 years has left behind. We heard more than 30,000 individual and collective testimonies from all sides in a divided country, and we read more than 1,000 reports coming from victim communities and from 24 countries where there are Colombian exiles. A total of more than 10 million people have been affected in various ways by that war. Among those victims, the weapons of the war killed 450,000 people between 1985 and 2018. Eighty per cent of all those affected, the survivors and those killed, were not soldiers or guerrillas, but unarmed civilians. That is war. It is always against the civilian population.

We heard multiple testimonies of the 50,000 kidnapped and of many of the thousands of children brought into the war, for which the guerrillas bear the greatest responsibility. We know about the forced disappearances and the so-called false positives, for which the State bears immense and direct responsibility. We have been to the sites of more than 4,000 massacres, some of more than 100 people, where entire communities were destroyed and where the barbarity of the paramilitaries exceeded all possible imagination. We walked alongside groups of the more than 8 million displaced persons, alongside hundreds of women whose bodies were used as battlefields, alongside peasants whose land was taken from them and alongside indigenous, Afro-Colombian and Roma communities, who were targeted more than others in an armed conflict where there is increasing racism.

It hurts us to see that all that was known in Colombia. The world knew about it. We saw it on the television and heard it on the radio, but we let it continue

for 50 years as if such barbarity did not concern us. Except for the struggles of many people who did not allow themselves to be intimidated by fear, as well as the efforts of our State, the Colombian Governments, and most particularly the struggle of mothers, who continue to shout: stop this war, stop it on all sides, stop it now. They cry out as the mothers of the young non-combatants who were killed and portrayed by their perpetrators as guerrillas who died in combat, and they continually demand: who gave the order?

But we have not just listened. We have sought answers to these questions. Why did that happen? What effects did all that have on the people, society and democracy? Who caused it and how? What can we do to prevent it from happening again? The search for answers to those questions has allowed us to understand the reason for the damage done to life, democracy and culture and to understand why the conflict seeks to persist and continue, as shown by the more than 1,000 leaders assassinated, together with 333 men and women of the former guerrillas of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia who signed the peace agreement. One of them was Ramiro Durán, whom Mr. Ruiz Massieu just mentioned.

We have understood that war is never simple and that armed actors wage war within a system where decisions are influenced or determined by cultural, political, economic, military, bureaucratic and criminal interests and goals. We have found that, at the origin and in the continuation of war, there is an ethical vacuum, a disregard for every human being and for the incomparable value of each woman and man. War damages everything that it touches. It harms those who are attacked and those who attack.

We have understood that, in the case of Colombia, it is necessary to change the security system. From the beginning, more than 60 years ago, we decided that security should be ensured by arms. Our security became a never-ending armed security because armed security always asks for more weapons and more justification in deaths. We established armed security to provide security for the authorities, the institutions, the assets and the companies, and even security to protect the armed bureaucracy itself. But there was not adequate security to protect the people, the individual. That is why, in the Colombian war, eight out of every 10 deaths were of civilians and the jungles, rivers and mountains were victims of anti-personnel mines, as were the thousands of young Colombians on both sides

of the conflict who fought in an always pointless war. That is why today we are asking that, if there are to be armed forces, it should be an army and a police force for peace, not for war, and we ask the international community not to give us anything for war. We want to make Colombia a global paradigm of reconciliation after so much suffering.

In Colombia, the war has been steeped in drug trafficking. Since we are in war mode, we borrowed from other drug-consuming countries the idea that drug trafficking is a matter of national security, and therefore a matter of war. We united to destroy the peasants who seek refuge in coca because we have left them impoverished and dispossessed of land and capital.

The Commission calls for an end to the war against drug trafficking and asks that efforts be made to understand how wrong it is to claim that armed prohibitionism can halt drug trafficking, when all such an approach does is increase the profits of drug trafficking.

Colombian victims have made their needs known, loud and clear, and, hearing them, we ask that drug-consuming nations shoulder their responsibility in capturing drug barons and ensuring that they are made subject to transitional justice processes, under which they must face up to public declarations of the truth about their political, economic and military partnerships as well as those with banks as relates to their businesses. They must also provide monetary redress to victims.

We invite everyone throughout the world to work to regulate markets and shoulder their responsibilities in terms of education and public health at a global level on an issue that affects us all, just as we learned to work together to care for ourselves during the coronavirus disease pandemic.

We ask that everyone understand the connection between drug trafficking and corruption, because criminal money buys off governors, mayors, judges, members of the police force, guerrilla members and military men, and it serves to make corruption at other levels more widespread.

We have understood that the solution to an armed conflict involves respecting each and every person as an equal human individual and that we must give every boy and girl, whether from indigenous or Afro-Colombian communities, the same respect as is reserved for presidents, rich people, doctors, diplomats, eminent

figures and army generals. All cults of personality and elites must end, and we must respect and love one another as holders of that same dignity. We must contribute to promoting an ethical framework based on human dignity drawing on all spiritual traditions.

We are optimistic that there are young people in Colombia that have taken up that legacy — young people who are working for peace and the protection of life in all its forms, including indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, educators and religious leaders, LGBTI+ persons, new entrepreneurial figures, all pooling their efforts, as well as judges, justices, artists, union members and human rights defenders.

Colombia has a long way to go, but it has begun its journey. It has accepted fearlessly the historical truth of its own tragedy and is determined to look forward to the future we will build, accepting our wounds, to ultimately enrich ourselves as a culture and as a people driven by creativity, art, freedom and the very creation of life.

May it be that the lesson of Colombia is to reject war everywhere for all time and lead us to passionately seek truth and the dignity of human beings. For Colombia and for the world, there will be a future if there is truth.

The President: I thank Mr. De Roux Rengifo for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Casso Piamba.

Ms. Casso Piamba (*spoke in Spanish*): As a leader of indigenous women in the Cauca department, today I wish to extend to the Council fraternal greetings, greetings of resistance, unity and strength. I place the life of each and every one present in the hands of Mother Nature, as well as all delegations, the Mission of Brazil to the United Nations, our Vice-President, Marta Lucía Ramírez, with particular greetings to Mr. Juan Carlos Vargas, all of whom gave our municipalities that experienced armed conflict the opportunity to have a country that has now embarked upon the journey to peace.

My name is Jineth Casso Piamba, an indigenous woman from San Lorenzo de Caldon. In my experience as a community leader over the past 11 years, I have made efforts devoted to protecting human rights and the economic empowerment of women and to promoting and strengthening the political participation of women in decision-making arenas, thus making it possible to

create spaces that allow equality between women and men and spaces leading to the building of peace.

When negotiations on the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace were announced, it was a relief, a cry of hope and an act of rebirth, a new feeling that arose from the depths of the souls of women and life-giving families, who dreamed of dawns full of light and hope and of warm and calm evenings around the hearth accompanied by wise words from the elders.

Caldono has a great deal of experience with the transformation that can take place with the laying down of arms and the integration of former combatants into civil society, as two territorial areas for training and reintegration were established in our town. That was a deeply significant action that made it possible to rebuild emotions, lives, spaces and homes that had been torn apart and abandoned as a result of the armed conflict.

After the signing of the agreement, forums were revitalized, with the help of the community and people in the context of a process of reintegration, thus creating bonds of friendship and renewed trust. We also had members of the international community visit our town because we were the second most heavily affected by the armed conflict — a community that for 40 years was stigmatized, isolated and excluded by institutional frameworks, a community that was denied the opportunity to shine and to draw attention to its richness and to all its capacities.

For us and the country, it was of utmost importance to strategically plan cross-cutting policies that allowed for integral land reform, such as programmes with a territorial focus, within which long-term decisions were taken such as the development of a road map for each of the 16 regions involved. Those included support in the area of health care, including sexual and reproductive health care for women, with, inter alia, an increase in the resources allocated to women, and efforts to make more visible the fact that in order for families to thrive, women must have decent homes for them and their families. That is particularly true for women that have been affected by the armed conflict and those who are heads of household.

Unfortunately, as part of the journey that we have completed in the last few years, 42 young people have been killed, including authorities and social leaders, and an average of 82 young people between the ages of 12 and 22 have been recruited by illegal armed

groups unknown in our territories. In the context of our goal of creating spaces for women and promoting their leadership in our regions, that caused concern and worry among our families, affecting women directly as leaders in their communities, mothers, wives, sisters, which means that they experience these effects more intensely, which shows that there is a need to work harder to defend rights, security and peace for our women.

We are aware of the engagement of this Government and of the different entities, and we wish to call on the country to set its eyes on these lands, so that we can work as a team and achieve the creation of better conditions for living with dignity through the comprehensive implementation of the peace agreement, in particular its gender provisions and the ethnic chapter.

For this change to occur, it is important to continue supporting productive and economic empowerment projects for women; generate spaces and guarantees of education for women that reduce gender inequalities and ensure progress in the rights of rural women, building on programmes where the specific needs and rights of women are included; guarantee progress in creating scenarios for women's political participation and improve the protection and security situation for women leaders and human rights defenders; provide guarantees for the reincorporation of peace signatories, particularly women; make progress on a community-reincorporation approach that allows us to structure civil society and reincorporation personnel; keep people who were victimized on the basis of their gender or ethnicity at the centre of the follow-up on the recommendations contained in the Truth Commission's final report, keeping in mind that we are a major part of the victims of the armed conflict; and safeguard transitional justice's approach to sexual violence in order to repair and transform our lives and our territories.

The monitoring of the different approaches is crucial, taking into account that multiple axes drive progress in efforts to comply with implementation of the agreement, and, accordingly, they depend on a large number of decentralized entities, including departmental, municipal and local authorities, as well as the allocation of the necessary technical and financial resources. This also implies an inter-institutional coordination effort that must be strengthened to make progress in the rural victim population's — and particularly the rural ethnic population's — effective enjoyment of their human rights from the same multidimensional

perspective, which allows communities to continue to be strengthened and ensures a peaceful country for new generations.

I am grateful to the Security Council for inviting me to be present in this space. I reiterate with all my heart that Caldono, the Department of Cauca and my beloved country, Colombia, are all full of good people — fighters and dreamers who work tirelessly to build a peaceful country — and we hope to continue to have the support of the Council and the international community as we work to realize this great dream. From the womb of Mother Nature and Mother Earth and from all that our life-giving womb represents, we will keep weaving resistance, joy, sisterhood and solidarity together to continue to build peace, not just for Colombia but for the world. From the town of Caldono, I extend a grateful embrace.

The President: I thank Ms. Casso Piamba for her briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I would like to start by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu for his briefing and for the work of his team. I would also like to express appreciation for and pay tribute to our briefers, Father de Roux Rengifo and Ms. Casso Piamba, and welcome Foreign Minister Ramírez to our meeting today. We appreciate the Foreign Minister's dedicated engagement with the Security Council throughout her tenure.

I would like to make three points today. First, I would like to congratulate the people of Colombia for making their voices heard in last month's presidential election. We commend political stakeholders, officials and volunteers for their dedication and for helping to ensure that the election was fair, inclusive and recognized by all parties.

We commend President-elect Petro's commitment to comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement and to addressing the challenges that remain. Foremost among these challenges, as we have heard, will be ensuring security for vulnerable communities affected by violence, displacement and confinement. We welcome the incoming Administration's commitment to creating the conditions for sustained and durable peace in Colombia and hope that a resumption of talks

with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional will contribute to this.

Secondly, the United Kingdom welcomes the publication of the Truth Commission's final report, a vital milestone in Colombia's reconciliation process. We pay tribute to the Commissioners' hard work in this vast undertaking, and to the thousands of victims who gave evidence, for their courage. The United Kingdom is committed to helping all parties implement the Commission's recommendations and to supporting the follow-up committee that will supervise their implementation.

Thirdly, we continue to encourage the acceleration of rural reform. While significant steps have been taken so far, accelerated progress on the territorially focused development programmes and the multipurpose cadastre should help build confidence in the commitment to peace and advance rural development to support the transformation of conflict-affected regions.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom remains fully committed to supporting Colombia on its path to lasting peace and to helping the people of Colombia to overcome the challenges that remain.

Ms. Juul (Norway): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu for his briefing on important developments in Colombia, and Ms. Jineth Casso Piamba for her compelling words. We also thank and warmly welcome Vice-President Marta Lucía Ramírez, and we offer a special thanks to Father Francisco de Roux Rengifo for his very important work.

I would like to congratulate Colombia on its peaceful and orderly elections and commend the main political actors for the dignified way they have behaved after the election results were known. Their constructive conduct throughout the election and their openness to further dialogue are encouraging and give further promise of a prosperous Colombia.

As a guarantor country, Norway finds President-elect Petro's call for national unity, underscoring that peace will be a central goal of his Administration, reassuring. Council members may be assured that, if desired by the parties, we will stand by our commitments as a guarantor country. That will also be the case should a dialogue with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional materialize.

The Truth Commission released its final report on 28 June. The Commission has carried out a titanic task, hearing thousands of testimonies and scrutinizing countless reports and documents. The result, as we saw in this Chamber today, is impressive. While healing will certainly take time, it is our hope that the report will be instrumental in trying to mend the wounds after more than 50 years of violent conflict. We encourage all sectors of Colombian society, and in particular the incoming Government, to follow up on the Commission's recommendations.

We would like to commend the members of the final secretariat of the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) for their testimony during the public hearings in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace regarding case 01. The way in which the top commanders of the former FARC-EP assumed personal responsibility, asked for forgiveness and provided further details about the crimes committed should serve as an example to all the other actors and entities whose cases are being examined by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Likewise, we commend the former members of the military who recognized their responsibility and acknowledged that civilian victims were falsely reported as guerrilla members killed in combat during the first public hearing in case 03. I would again like to express Norway's appreciation and admiration for all who have provided truthful testimony to the Commission and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, including, of course, the victims.

As we have said on numerous occasions, the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition is a crucial instrument for delivering justice after the violent internal conflict. It puts the victims at the centre and is perhaps the most sophisticated system of its kind globally. Colombians can be proud of it, as it can serve as an inspiration and model for transitional justice systems elsewhere. The Commission's report and the way in which the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is carrying out its mandate are also evidence of the system's virtues.

Nonetheless, Norway remains concerned about the security situation for former combatants and local leaders working to implement the peace agreement. We urge the incoming Government to take the necessary steps to improve the situation and encourage the new Administration to step up the implementation of the accord's provisions with regard to rural reform,

political participation and ethnic and gender issues. In other words, we encourage the Government to work strategically to continue to overcome the root causes of Colombia's conflict.

Let me end by thanking Vice-President Marta Lucía Ramírez and her Government for the cooperation extended to us over the past four years and by reiterating that Norway remains committed to supporting her country in its efforts to ensure peace and prosperity for the Colombian people.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the personal participation of Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Foreign Minister of Colombia, and Francisco José de Roux Rengifo in today's meeting, as well as the briefing by Ms. Jineth Casso Piamba. We thank Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, for his briefing on the situation in the country.

At our last meeting (see S/PV.9015), the mood was one of anxiety as we considered the outcomes of the five years that had elapsed since the signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. Today we have definite reasons for taking a more positive view of the prospects for seeing that historic document implemented. Colombia's recent elections demonstrated that the existential need for a lasting peace process is supported by millions of Colombians from various political camps. It was affirmed by the election victory for the forces calling for an end to the many years of conflict, which have left the country with countless victims and tragedies. We will never tire of repeating that the agreement has not only brought about a long-awaited end to a half-century of internal armed conflict, but it has also provided the peace process with the support of the international community as represented by the Security Council.

There is no question that there is a great deal of work facing the Government in implementing its obligations. The traditional challenges are still there in the form of issues such as agrarian reform, crop substitution, the safety of the civilian population and the economic, political and legal reintegration of participants into the peace process. We hope that the leaders of the country will at last begin to relate to ex-combatants as participants in the peace process, not former enemies. Between the previous report and this one the members of the Security Council are now reading that Colombian society must overcome its

entrenched stigmatization and contradictions and learn to look towards a common future, and we believe that such a change in the relations among the partners in the peace process is long overdue. Overcoming this difficult legacy is also the responsibility of the Truth Commission, which published its comprehensive report on 28 June, an event we can only applaud. It is yet another example of Colombian society's desire for genuine reconciliation and confirms the viability of the peace agreement, which has remained relevant despite the attempts that have been made over the past four years to torpedo its implementation.

We agree with the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/513) that the election of Gustavo Petro Urrego as President and Francia Márquez as Vice-President, the first Afro-Colombian to hold that position, allows us to hope for a new impetus in the Government's implementation of its commitments under the Final Agreement. We are hearing appropriate assurances and hope that we will see palpable positive change. Russia is firmly committed to continuing to help Colombia, a country that is a friend to us, to a thorough restoration of peace. In that context, we welcome the remarks by the President-elect and the head of the National Liberation Army concerning their efforts to begin negotiations without the deliberately unacceptable preconditions that have previously hindered the prospects for peace. We hope that the renewed management team will enable the inclusion of forces that were previously on the sidelines of the peacebuilding process.

In every one of our statements we have reiterated that genuine peace in the country is impossible without the consensus of all of the main players, and Colombia's relations with its neighbours are no less important to lasting peace. We hope that the Government of Gustavo Petro will show political acumen and consider the possibility of re-establishing relations with Venezuela, beginning with the issue of border security. That would be a major blow to criminality and could provide some insurance against any possible misunderstandings or provocations that might have dangerous consequences.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia will continue to support the Colombian peace process to ensure that it is lasting and irreversible. We express our full support for the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, under the leadership of Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and to Cuba and Norway, the guarantors of the Final Agreement.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu and President of the Truth Commission Francisco José de Roux Rengifo for their briefings. I also listened carefully to the statement by the representative of civil society. And I welcome the presence of Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Foreign Minister of Colombia, at today's meeting.

China welcomed the successful holding of the second set of presidential elections in Colombia since the signing in 2016 of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, and appreciates the commitment of President-elect Petro to implementing the peace agreement, as well as his call for national unity and his focus on achieving peace as the new Government's core goal. We hope that his Government will build on the achievements that have already been made, actively promote the peace process in Colombia, work to address the challenges in implementing the peace agreement and consolidate the hard-won peace gains.

The spread of violence by illegal armed groups in some areas of Colombia has seriously threatened the safety of civilians, especially women and children, and has been disrupting the peace process. China is pleased that President-elect Petro has expressed a willingness to resume peace talks with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo and begin dialogue with other armed groups that have yet to join the peace process. We hope that the new Government will commit to improving the security situation in the conflict-affected areas through dialogue and negotiations to end the armed conflict once and for all, and by strengthening the deployment of security forces in conflict-affected areas where the Government lacks effective control with a view to protecting civilians, especially women, children, minorities and former combatants.

Development is key to eradicating the root causes of violence and conflict. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report (S/2022/513), the provisions of the peace agreement are closely interlinked, and security and development are inseparable. Fully implementing the key provisions of the peace agreement, such as rural reform, the reintegration of former combatants and the substitution of illicit crops, requires sustained Government investment in order to accelerate the distribution of land and housing, which will provide the necessary conditions for the reintegration of former

combatants and ensure balanced development in every region of the country. We hope that the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime will play an active role in that regard and provide additional support.

The ultimate goal of transitional justice is to achieve lasting peace. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace recently held the first public hearings on the voluntary acknowledgement of responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity during the conflict. The Truth Commission also released its final report on the causes of the conflict and its recommendations for preventing further conflict. These are important developments in the transitional justice process. Lasting peace and reconciliation require justice processes in which all crimes committed during the conflict are made public and the perpetrators acknowledge their responsibility and are held to account. At the same time, lasting peace requires strengthening social inclusion and cohesion so that everyone can enjoy the peace dividends and development opportunities on an equal footing, embodying the concept that peace is rooted in people's hearts. That is the only way that the transitional justice process can effectively play its central role in eliminating the potential for conflict.

The peace process in Colombia is a success story in which we are seeing an end brought to the conflict and peace restored through dialogue and negotiations. China appreciates the important role played by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia in supporting the peace process on the ground. We hope that the Mission will maintain cooperation with the new Government and strengthen coordination with the United Nations country team in order to expand its contribution to the achievement of lasting peace, stability and sustainable development in Colombia as soon as possible.

China firmly supports Colombia in its efforts to fully implement the peace agreement. We stand ready to work with the rest of the international community to continue to support the Colombian-led and Colombian-owned peace process. I look forward to seeing the Colombian people make additional progress in reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu for his briefing and presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/513) and for

his and his team's work. The role of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia in supporting peace and reconciliation in Colombia continues to be essential. As always, we welcome the presence of Vice President and Foreign Minister Marta Lucía Ramírez in the Security Council today. And I want to thank Father de Roux Rengifo for joining us and for the vital work of the Truth Commission. I have to say honestly that I found myself moved and inspired by his words. His remark that there is a future if there is truth has universal application and will stay with me for a long time. I also thank Ms. Casso Piamba for her remarks and insight into her work, experiences, aspirations and those of her community.

The United States congratulates the people of Colombia, President-elect Gustavo Petro and Vice President-elect Francia Márquez on a free and fair elections process. We welcome the incoming Petro Administration's early efforts to promote a dialogue of national unity. That is an essential step in overcoming entrenched polarization and ushering in a Colombia that is at peace. We also congratulate those elected to Congress and note that their numbers include 85 women, or 30 per cent, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted in his statement — an increase of 10 per cent. We commend the inclusion of 16 new representatives of rural conflict victims who will serve in peace seats in the House. They have a vital role to play in expanding the State presence in neglected rural areas that have been a focus for violence and in increasing attention to them.

While the successful democratic elections have taken centre-stage over the past three months, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has also been carrying out its first public hearings on the acknowledgement of truth and responsibility. We are encouraged that indicted individuals voluntarily acknowledged responsibility for their actions during the conflict and apologized to their victims. We call for the process to continue peacefully as the Judicial Panel for Acknowledgement of Truth and Responsibility weighs those acknowledgements against information provided by investigators and victims. We should also note the release on 28 June of the Truth Commission's final report. The report and its recommendations symbolize the end of an important listening process and the beginning of a period of reflection on the past and future. Through the diverse voices represented in the report, we hope that reconciliation becomes an enduring reality.

Much has already been achieved since the signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, and Colombia has made notable progress in becoming a more peaceful and inclusive society. However, as we all know, there are concerns still to be addressed, including ongoing insecurity. We are seeing a growing number of forced disappearances and large-scale killings in Colombia, including of human rights and environmental defenders, and the security of former combatants is increasingly threatened by illegal armed groups. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities continue to be disproportionately victimized by illegal armed groups, an issue compounded by the absence of a State presence in rural areas. In order to achieve rural land reform and reintegration, a safe environment must be established in long-neglected areas.

It is crucial that the United Nations Verification Mission be able to continue its work and that all chapters of the peace accord move forward. We welcome the new Administration's commitment to the comprehensive implementation of the agreement, particularly its ethnic chapter, where progress has lagged behind that of other chapters. We encourage Colombia to fully meet its commitments to ethnic communities and improve their security, rights and opportunities. Colombia should take pride in its recent elections and commitment to the democratic process. Although achieving a lasting peace is no easy task, we know that the people of Colombia are up to the challenge.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Let me thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu for his valuable briefing and the remarkable work that he and his team are doing in Colombia. We welcome the participation of Father de Roux Rengifo and thank him for informing the Council about the historic final report of the Truth Commission. It represents the voice and the testimony of millions of victims and all who endured so much suffering during all the years of conflict. As he rightly said, establishing the truth is the first step to ensuring justice and accountability, giving hope and proceeding on a path leading towards sustained peace and reconciliation in his country. I thank Ms. Casso Piamba for her briefing. Information from civil society on the ground always contributes to providing a meaningful and inclusive discussion in the Security Council. I also welcome the presence of Vice President and Foreign Minister Ramírez at this meeting.

I would like to congratulate the people of Colombia on their election of a new President. The high electoral turnout demonstrates the commitment of the Colombian people to democracy and stability and attests to Colombians' solid anchorage in and true commitment to democracy and stability. We sincerely commend the outgoing Government of Colombia for its engagement in ensuring a free and fair electoral process by creating peaceful and conducive conditions. We are reassured that the transitional period will be conducted in a similar constructive manner.

We welcome the commitment of the President-elect to advancing the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, bringing the country together and initiating a national dialogue with all political forces, marginalized ethnic groups, civil society and other important stakeholders, with a strong focus on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women.

It is very encouraging that, for the first time in the history of Colombia, a woman representing the Afro-Colombian community, an environmentalist and a human rights activist, who herself was a victim of the conflict, was elected to the high office of Vice-President.

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace, created by the peace agreement to ensure accountability for the atrocities committed in Colombia, has made significant progress with the public hearings on the acknowledgement of truth and responsibility, which is an important step towards the issuance of restorative sentences, contributing to victims' rights to justice and reconciliation.

We welcome the long-awaited final report presented by the Truth Commission after years of and extensive dialogue — an important milestone in the healing process for the people of Colombia. It will shed full light on nearly six decades of conflict, atrocities and human rights violations committed during the country's armed conflict.

The account in the report is heartbreaking. The civilian population has suffered unimaginable hardship and suffering, such as families not knowing the fate of their loved ones and women, used as a weapon of war, testifying to brutal sexual violence during their captivity — a despicable expression of power to intimidate and spread terror.

It is our hope that the report of the Truth Commission will serve as a basis for the long-needed reconciliation, non-repetition and peacebuilding of the country, including taking into account victims' rights and gender perspective. It is only once all the facts have been established that the country might be given a real chance to move beyond the suffering of the past.

Yet, as we know and as we heard, many challenges and obstacles remain. Civilians in various parts of the country continue to suffer serious abuses at the hands of guerrillas of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional, dissidents of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia and paramilitary successor groups. Human rights defenders, journalists, indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders and other community activists face death threats and violence.

For that reason, the State needs to establish its authority and consolidate its presence in areas historically affected by the conflict. Criminal gangs and armed groups need to be dismantled once and for all. The Government needs to take adequate steps to address all those issues and, most important, protect civilians.

We encourage the incoming Government and the people of Colombia to keep up such momentum with the comprehensive implementation of the peace agreement and to advance with reforms on the key issues that are lagging behind, such as land reform and ethnic and gender provisions.

The progress achieved in Colombia is, by all accounts, strong and promising. The presidential election opens a new chapter for the country, which we want to see as a continuation of the consolidation of peace, democracy and social justice. Inclusive dialogue, genuine reconciliation and justice are the key words that will, in our view, define the future of Colombia. That is what the people voted for last month, and we look forward to seeing them implemented to the benefit of the country and its people.

Mr. Benaabou (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Mr. Francisco José de Roux Rengifo and Ms. Jineith Casso Piamba for their briefings. I welcome the presence among us of the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez.

Colombia is a model for the international community. The Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace is a historic achievement, and its implementation is essential to building peace on a daily basis, while facing the reality of half a century of conflict.

I would like to highlight three points.

First, it is positive that the presidential elections were held peacefully and without major disruption. That election and the changeover that it marked show the strength of Colombian democracy. We welcome the commitment of the Colombian President-elect to implementing the Final Agreement in its entirety.

Secondly, France welcomes the publication of the Truth Commission's report. It is a remarkable piece of work and an essential step on the path to reconciliation. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace is making progress, placing the victims at the heart of the process, as evidenced by the first public truth hearings. They pave the way for the first restorative sentences, which will be a turning point. All parties to the conflict must engage in those justice and truth efforts as a necessary step towards the return of lasting peace in the country.

Thirdly, the continuing violence in Colombia threatens the peace agreement. Security guarantees are insufficient. In every report of the Secretary-General, we hear of the killings of ex-combatants, human rights defenders and social leaders. The Colombian State must put an end to that. That means strengthening the State presence in the areas historically overlooked by the Final Agreement. We also call on all parties concerned to fully implement the Secretary-General's recommendations to end the recruitment, use and abduction of children by armed groups.

Viable socioeconomic opportunities must be provided to the populations that have suffered from the conflict. To achieve permanent peace, even more needs to be done with regard to rural reform, access to land and access to housing. The chapters of the agreement that deal with inclusiveness and the situation of women and young people are also essential.

France welcomes the progress made by Colombia since 2016, but challenges remain. We call on the Colombian authorities to continue and expedite the full implementation of the agreement and to allocate the necessary resources. That is the surest way to entrench peace in Colombia.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): At the outset, we thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu and Mr. Francisco José de Roux Rengifo for their valuable briefings and all their work in Colombia. We also thank Ms. Casso Piamba for her valuable insights. We welcome the participation of Her Excellency Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, in this meeting.

The United Arab Emirates will focus on three main points today: the political situation, transitional justice and the security situation.

First, we congratulate Colombia on the successful presidential elections in June. Colombia is starting a new chapter in its history, and the United Arab Emirates supports its path towards peace and stability. We thank the current Administration for its efforts in implementing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, and we wish the incoming Administration success in building on such efforts going forward. At this critical stage, it is important to prioritize the full and comprehensive implementation of the peace agreement, particularly the provisions on gender and protecting the most vulnerable. The Special Forum on Gender and the formation of the peace and victims' caucus can support and strengthen the implementation of the Final Agreement's provisions.

Secondly, on transitional justice, we support the survivor-centred approach to reconciliation and the progress made by the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition, including the Truth Commission's recent publication of its final report. While that publication is an opportunity for the Colombian people to reflect on their past, its recommendations point the way to a future of hope for the generations to come. In that context, we support the Commission's efforts to establish a committee to monitor the implementation of its recommendations.

Along with the other components of the Comprehensive System, those mechanisms will contribute to strengthening accountability. Moreover, the Commission's efforts to include young women and young men in those processes is critical and reinforces the fundamental role of youth in peace efforts.

Thirdly, we remain concerned about the security situation and the continued attacks against civilians, former combatants and security forces. Swift and

decisive steps must be taken to address the violence and ensure that it does not undermine the implementation of the peace agreement. Any efforts for dialogue will make sustainable progress only if they are complemented by other elements of the agreement, including to fully implement security guarantees and disarm, demobilize and reintegrate armed groups, particularly the children affected by the conflict. Those efforts must also be gender-responsive, not least because of the disproportionate impact that violence has on women and girls. We encourage the increased deployment of women officers and the provision of training to address the particular challenges that women face, including sexual and gender-based violence.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its commitment to supporting Colombia in its journey to achieve sustainable peace and stability. We also reaffirm our full support for the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and its efforts.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): Let me begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu; the President of the Truth Commission, Father Francisco José de Roux Rengifo; and civil-society representative Ms. Jineth Casso Piamba for their respective briefings. I also welcome the presence of the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Her Excellency Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, at today's meeting.

The peaceful holding of presidential elections in Colombia is indeed a significant development. It is encouraging to see that the people of Colombia once again have reposed their faith in democracy by participating in record numbers in the elections for the second time since the signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting. That is a clear indication of the trust and commitment of the people to the agreement. For that, we congratulate the people and the Government of Colombia. We also congratulate the President-elect, Mr. Gustavo Petro.

We heard from the President of the Truth Commission today as to why the release of the final report of the Truth Commission is a historic moment. We hope that the findings and recommendations of the Truth Commission will greatly contribute to the process of reconciliation and help in moving towards a more inclusive, peaceful, secure and prosperous future for all Colombians. We take positive note of the historic first hearings of truth and acknowledgement

of responsibility held by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which is testimony to the significant progress made by the transitional justice system enshrined in the peace agreement.

The objectives of the peace agreement are ambitious, and their realization will require time. While we need to appreciate the positive developments that Colombia has witnessed in the last few years, we also have to be cognizant of the impediments to the implementation of the peace agreement that remain. We believe that the solutions to issues such as security, rural reforms, crop substitution and the rehabilitation of ex-combatants are intrinsically linked to political reforms, decentralization, the extension of State authority and reconciliation.

There have been serious security incidents involving threats, killings and the subsequent displacement of cooperative members, impacting reintegration initiatives. The disputes between illegal armed groups, including dissident groups of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo over territorial control, and illegal trafficking routes remain a concern. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, including women and children, have continued to suffer from persistent violence.

We appreciate the fact that despite those challenges, the Colombian authorities are making progress in addressing the security, housing and land guarantees enshrined in the peace agreement. We believe that the prioritization of rural reforms aimed at increasing employment and livelihood opportunities is fundamental to sustaining peace.

The President-elect has also underscored the importance of the implementation of the peace agreement. There have been attempts to engage the Ejército de Liberación Nacional as part of the reconciliation initiatives. We hope that that positive trend will continue in the coming months and that the gains made so far will be consolidated.

India values its bilateral ties with Colombia, with which we share a relationship spanning six decades. The increase in the frequency of high-level visits and engagements, especially over the past year, is testimony to the strength of our relationship, which is based on shared democratic values and development goals. Over the years our bilateral relations have deepened and diversified in areas such as space, health, science and technology and biotechnology. There is growing interest

among Colombians about India's culture and heritage. We are committed to expanding and deepening our development and trade partnership with Colombia.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that while the peace process in Colombia continues to be a source of inspiration, the international community must continue with its responsibility to support the Government and the people of Colombia in their journey to consolidate and sustain peace. In that direction, we support the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the initiatives of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his assessment today and to offer special thanks to Padre De Roux for his thoughtful and really inspirational briefing. I also thank Jineth for her powerful words to us today as well. I would like to especially welcome Vice-President Ramírez and thank her for her sincere and consistent engagement with the Council and its members.

The past reporting period has borne witness to a number of historic moments in Colombia. We welcome the largely peaceful conduct of presidential elections in May and June and the commitment of all candidates to upholding the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. We stand ready to support the incoming Government throughout the transition period and beyond.

This is an opportunity for actors from across Colombian society to recommit to the full implementation of the accord. As a new Congress is inaugurated next week, the formation of the "peace and victims' caucus", consisting of the 16 representatives of the special transitional electoral districts for peace, will further bring the voices of victims and survivors to the table.

We also welcome efforts to engage Colombian youth in political participation and peacebuilding, including by the platform of women's organizations Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres.

The Colombian transitional justice system took significant steps over the reporting period. The public acknowledgement of responsibility and truth in Cases 01 and 03 of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace represented historic progress in addressing legacy injustices in Colombia. We look forward to continued progress

in those and other cases and to the first issuance of restorative sentences later this year.

The final report of the Truth Commission, as powerfully shared earlier by Padre de Roux, contains important recommendations and presents a platform upon which national reconciliation and healing can and must be built. The Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed Missing continues its critical work in providing deserved closure to grieving families. The continued safe and meaningful participation of victims in those processes is essential to the legitimacy of the institutions and is also fundamental to ensuring dignity and non-repetition.

I look forward to facilitating an in-depth discussion on the transitional justice system in Colombia at this afternoon's Arrria Formula meeting.

While working to acknowledge the injustices of the past, we must also recognize and address those that still occur in the present. For communities across Colombia, particularly indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, violence remains an everyday reality, through victimization by armed groups, sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement, confinement and forced child recruitment.

Those who stand up in support of peace, human rights and dignity continue to be targeted, threatened, and, in some cases, they lose their lives. The continued killing of signatories to the peace agreement, most recently Ronald Rojas, is a deplorable and unacceptable price to pay for committing to a peaceful future. In particular, we know the cost for women who stand up for themselves and their communities, such as Jesusita Moreno in Cali: it is often fatal. Accountability for such crimes must be ensured, and impunity eradicated.

Effective resourcing of the Comprehensive Programme for Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders is absolutely essential. The full and timely implementation of the gender provisions of the peace agreement will further aid these efforts.

Progress is also required on the National Commission on Security Guarantees, including the adoption and implementation of the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups. Those guarantees are critical to reducing violence and providing safety and security to those who have committed themselves to peace.

At this moment of political transition, truth and accountability, Colombia stands at an important juncture. The support of the Security Council and the international community for the implementation of the Colombian peace accord is as vital as ever. Ireland will continue to stand with the Colombian Government and the Colombian people. We remain committed to a shared, equitable, inclusive and peaceful future.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), namely, Gabon, Ghana and Kenya.

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu and Ms. Jineth Casso Piamba for their briefings, and we welcome the powerful testimony of Mr. Francisco José de Roux Rengifo, the President of the Truth Commission. We further welcome the participation of the representative of Colombia, Her Excellency Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs. We thank her for her positive and illuminating engagement with the Security Council over the past four years. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

We convey our heartfelt congratulations to President-elect Gustavo Petro and the Vice-President-elect Francia Márquez. Their election by the people of Colombia offers an opportunity for the accelerated implementation of the Final Agreement. It also promises a new era of inclusion in the country's policies that would encourage the realization of the provisions of the ethnic chapter of the peace agreement and the constitutional requirement to treat all Colombians fairly and equally.

In line with the African Union's Constitutive Act, which recognizes Africa's diaspora as a sixth region, we applaud the election of Ms. Francia Márquez as the first Afro-Colombian to attain such high office. Her election reflects her powerful talents as a leader and the Colombian peoples' embrace of their country's diversity. We take this opportunity to send our brotherly regards to the Afro-Colombian community and to applaud its resilience and strong spirit of hope over generations of people who have faced great difficulties and obstacles.

The Colombian peace process has valuable lessons to teach the world on how to end a protracted war and embark on the road to lasting peace and reconciliation. The Colombian Government's positive and proactive engagement with the Security Council should be

closely studied and utilized by other countries in serious conflict.

Significant progress has been made in the five years since the signing of the Final Agreement. However, as many Colombians will accept, there is still a lot to be done. We are encouraged by the conciliatory messages from the President-elect and are optimistic that his Government will inject the necessary energy, dynamism and commitment in furthering the peace process. As the A3, as constituted now, and in future, we will continue to support and view the implementation of the ethnic chapter as the clearest proof of commitment and success.

The full reintegration of former combatants into society remains key to the success of the peace process. The A3 commends the positive progress on the development programmes with territorial focus and the comprehensive rural reform, as well as the consolidation of former territorial areas for training and reintegration. However, the slow progress in gaining access to land for those living outside the territorial areas, including former combatants of indigenous and Afro-Colombian origin, is an undermining factor. We call on the authorities to resolve any issues surrounding the full implementation of these provisions.

In order to address problems facing former combatants of indigenous and Afro-Colombian descent, we reiterate the need for adequate and reliable resource allocation for the Special High-Level Forum of Ethnic Peoples. We further encourage all parties to make use of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Agreement to resolve any differences.

Transitional justice remains the cornerstone of Colombia's peace process. The A3 applauds the progress within the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. In particular, we welcome the report of the Truth Commission as a landmark achievement. The A3 salutes the victims who had the courage to share their stories, painful as they might have been. We hope that this report and the implementation of its recommendations will serve as a vehicle to bring healing and closure to the victims. We urge all Colombians to build upon the recommendations to ensure national reconciliation, which will be the basis for Colombia's lasting peace and security. In addition, we recognize the commendable progress recorded by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in the

pursuit of justice for the victims. We look forward to the sentencing in Cases 01 and 03 so that the victims can finally start to heal.

The A3 is cognizant of the link between the illegal narcotics trade and armed conflict. We reiterate the importance of the successful resettlement of former combatants to keep them away from criminality so as to secure the gains that have been achieved. We laud the Government's efforts to eliminate illicit crops including through the implementation of the National Comprehensive Programme for Substitution of Illicit Crops. We encourage the involvement of the affected communities and the deployment of methods that have no negative public health or environmental implications.

The A3 is deeply concerned over the persistent violence targeting former combatants and conflict-affected communities, including the Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities, social leaders, women peacebuilders and human rights activists. We condemn the horrific crimes, including sexual violence committed against women and children. We call for the stepping up of the implementation of the gender provisions of the Final Agreement, including through the provision of security and requisite resources for their productive projects.

We are particularly concerned by reports of intensified armed confrontations between armed groups, including the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). These confrontations are affecting innocent civilians, especially in the departments of Chocó and Arauca. We underscore the need for urgent implementation of the National Commission security guarantees extended to the vulnerable, taking into consideration gender needs.

The A3 supports all efforts that seek to consolidate the peace process, including through the incorporation of groups that are not parties to the Final Agreement. We applaud the efforts by stakeholders encouraging the Government and the ELN to engage in dialogue, and we welcome the willingness expressed by both the ELN and the President-elect in this regard. We urge both parties to pursue constructive dialogue for the greater good of the country. Furthermore, it is absolutely essential for the Government of Colombia to creatively explore avenues for the normalization of relations with all its neighbours, as that is key to the continued security and prosperity of the Colombian people and regional stability.

Finally, we extend our sincere appreciation to President Iván Duque and his Government for their commitment to the peace process over the past four years, including the implementation of the peace agreement. In conclusion, the A3 reaffirms its solidarity with the Government and the people of Colombia in their pursuit of peace and prosperity. We also offer our unwavering support to the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

Mr. Cisneros Chávez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu and Mr. Francisco José de Roux Rengifo, President of the Truth Commission, for their briefings. Mexico also welcomes Ms. Jineth Casso Piamba and the fact that once again space has been made for civil society to participate in our discussions on the situation in Colombia. We hope that healthy practice will continue. I also welcome the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez, to today's meeting.

As we heard, Colombia is at a key juncture in its history following its successful conclusion of presidential elections. The electoral process demonstrated the maturity of Colombia's institutions and its people's commitment to democracy. The turnout in the second round of the presidential elections reached historic levels and sent a clear message that the Colombian people rejected any attempt to hinder the exercise of democracy with violence. My country welcomes the commitment of President-elect Gustavo Petro to implementing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. We also welcome his initiative aimed at achieving total peace, which includes, among other things, a resumption of negotiations with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. During the transitional period it will be important to ensure that the Security Council provides the Colombian authorities with unequivocal support in following up on the major progress achieved to date and resolving outstanding issues.

With regard to the implementation of the peace agreement, we agree with the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/513) that much has already been achieved in Colombia. Despite the remaining challenges, the country is now more peaceful and inclusive, thanks to efforts made by all Colombians to address their painful past. We therefore acknowledge the commitment of the former combatants who have continued to work to bring about peace, especially their gradual involvement

in productive projects, in which 74 per cent of female former combatants are already participating. In that regard, we believe it is now crucial to take steps to ensure that the reintegration of former combatants is sustainable, something that will require staunch political will and predictable and stable funding.

We must also seek solutions that enable women to assume greater responsibility for project management and the entire process of implementing the agreement. That requires greater investment in training and in the provision of services such as day care that give women the time and conditions they need to play an active role in decision-making. In that regard, it is unacceptable that until now, members of the country's indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities have been almost entirely sidelined from political participation. We therefore welcome the historic fact that an Afro-Colombian woman will hold the vice-presidency of the country for the first time, and we congratulate Ms. Francia Márquez.

Mexico recognizes the sensitive and complex but very necessary work being done in the area of transitional justice. We welcome in particular the comprehensive report of the Truth Commission and urge the authorities to consider its recommendations, while engaging in close dialogue with all the parties involved in the peace process. The report reaffirms the commitment to putting victims at the heart of the implementation of the peace, which is the right approach. We also welcome the holding of the first public hearings of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace on cases of abductions, forced disappearances and executions carried out by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia. Those are decisive steps towards genuine reconciliation, which can ensure that past atrocities are not repeated. And my country acknowledges the contributions of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund in this area, which were vital to establishing the Truth Commission and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

In conclusion, I would like to express Mexico's serious concern about the violence perpetrated against activists and social leaders. We urge the authorities to strengthen existing protection mechanisms and to resolve the structural causes of such violence. The plight of children who have been victims of forced recruitment by armed groups also demands the Government's full attention. To a large extent the future of peace in Colombia is in the hands of the younger generations.

We believe that they will know how to prevent repeats of mistakes made in the past.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Brazil.

I would like to express our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his update. I also thank Mr. Francisco José de Roux Rengifo, President of the Truth Commission, and Ms. Jineth Casso Piamba for their briefings. And I welcome Marta Lucía Ramírez, the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, to the Council.

I am glad of the opportunity to once again commend the Colombian people for the remarkable job they have been doing. The historic elections concluded in June, in which Gustavo Petro was elected President, constitute more proof of the strength of Colombian democracy and the country's institutional maturity. President Duque's Administration has consistently shown its commitment to the comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. We want to take this opportunity to recognize and applaud the efforts of his Administration to start addressing the root causes of the cycles of political violence in Colombia.

Transitional justice is an area that has steadily advanced in recent years, as the reports of the Secretary-General have consistently shown. Brazil welcomes the final report of the Truth Commission and its recommendations. We believe that the Commission's work leaves a solid legacy for strengthening the ongoing efforts for peace and reconciliation in Colombia. We are glad that the President-elect has voiced his commitment to the full implementation of the peace agreement so as to enhance efforts to guarantee the safety of ex-combatants and strengthen policies regarding women, indigenous populations and Afro-descendants. Brazil is fully cognizant that the implementation of the peace agreement will depend on continued efforts by multiple Administrations. Enhancing social policies in historically neglected areas that have suffered badly in decades of conflict requires time and incremental work. In that context, we underline that a smooth transition of power is key to accelerating progress. We hope that the new Government will know how to build on the work of the current Administration and strengthen policies where needed. But we are confident that political violence will never return to the fore in

Colombia and hope that peace can also be achieved with active insurgent groups such as the Ejército de Liberación Nacional.

Finally, I would like to stress once again that peace in Colombia is an achievement of its society. Colombia's voluntary decision to involve the United Nations in monitoring the implementation of its peace agreement is testament to Colombia's commitment to peace and an opportunity for the Council to play an innovative role in its mission for peace and security. In the current challenging geopolitical context, we are glad that the Council has been instrumental in the consolidation of peace in Colombia. Its strict adherence to the role that Colombia asked it to perform, as foreseen in the mandate, remains essential to fostering trust between the international community and the parties in the country.

As a neighbour and close country, Brazil reaffirms its commitment to working with Colombia to ensure a prosperous path for both of our societies.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

Ms. Lucía Ramírez (Colombia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and of course Secretary-General António Guterres. I would also like to thank Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/513). I am grateful to Ambassador Fernandez De Soto Valderrama and to Father De Roux Rengifo for his briefing, as well as to Alejandra Miller and Saul Alonso Franco, members of the Truth Commission. It has been a pleasure to see Ms. Jineth Casso Piamba, and I thank her for attesting to women's commitment to peace in Colombia. Let me say that it is very important to Colombia to express our gratitude all the members of the international community and of the Security Council for their commitment and support to Colombia in its quest for a true and stable peace, which requires a permanent commitment to the rule of law, as President Duque Márquez mentioned in the Security Council in April (see S/PV.9015), and of course to ending drug trafficking, which is a main driver of violence in Colombia.

We appreciate the sincere commitment to peace in Colombia, and the friendship and support that have been shown to our Ambassador, who like me is attending his

last Security Council meeting in his current capacity in order to listen to the briefing by Carlos Ruiz Massieu, as Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, for which the Council has approved our Government's request for an extension, and for which I am grateful. I also want to thank Ambassador Fernandez De Soto Valderrama for his commitment and his extraordinary performance in his high-level diplomatic roles. He has honoured Colombian foreign policy not only as my predecessor as Minister for Foreign Affairs, but also as our current Ambassador to the United Nations.

(spoke in Spanish)

As you just said, Sir, Brazil's presidency of the Security Council is very significant for us in the context of this highly important and symbolic meeting. I once again commend Jineth Casso Piamba on her outstanding briefing via video-teleconference, underscoring the bravery of so many women and the contribution they have made to peacebuilding in Colombia. Indigenous women, indeed all women, are critical to building a lasting and stable peace in our country. I also want to highlight the presence of Father De Roux Rengifo, President of the Truth Commission, whom we met with on 29 June to discuss the report he had just presented. At that meeting, President Duque and I were able to listen to the details of that important report and provide our own comments. We know that the work of the Truth Commission is a great moral responsibility, involving, as it does, listening to the individual voices of victims and stakeholders. Lasting peace requires comprehensive, objective and impartial truth. We are grateful for Father De Roux's efforts and those of the other members of the Commission in that regard.

In April, speaking to the members of the Council, President Duque committed to ensuring that the stocktaking exercise of the past four years of his Government would not end today. On the contrary, our efforts will continue until the very last moment of our term. We know that what we were able to achieve over the past few months has brought much progress and many challenges while also dealing with completely unpredictable crises such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. However, our Government maintained its commitment to implementing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace despite the crisis caused by COVID-19.

I want to emphasize the challenge that achieving peaceful coexistence has been. Colombia is not the only country in the world to have gone through a transitional justice process, involving addressing many difficulties related to years of social polarization, gaps and divisions that had gone unresolved thanks to institutional problems and the enormous challenges posed by illegal groups and their activities. But what is clear to everyone is that we are making undeniable and irreversible progress on a path that will lead us towards the fair, law-abiding, safe, inclusive, developed, equitable, solidarity-driven and peaceful society that we all long for.

The agreement signed in 2016, and the efforts of the Government as part of its policy of peace with legality, has demanded sensible planning with deliverable road maps and budgets, led by President Duque together with his former Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, Emilio Archila, and the current Counsellor, Juan Carlos Vargas, who is here with me today. And I am grateful for the work of both Counsellors in terms of stabilizing, building and implementing peace in Colombia. Over the next 10 years, the deliverable budgets will undoubtedly need to be increased if we continue to maintain the extraordinary pace of growth that the Colombian economy has shown internationally over the past 18 months, with a view to generating more resources and additional jobs that can create dignified living conditions for every Colombian citizen.

We hope that the new Government will continue to move forward with similar economic growth indicators and to create jobs and additional budget resources that, as many Council members have emphasized, can accelerate the implementation of the agreement with the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and avoid the risk of any setbacks.

Today Colombia is closer to peace than ever before, as we have witnessed the dismantling of the continent's longest-standing guerrilla group, the surrender of weapons and the reintegration of most of its members into civilian life. I say "most", because unfortunately we know that not all have been integrated into civilian life and many are currently involved in drug-trafficking based in Venezuela. But the political party made up of the former FARC-EP, now known as the Comunes party, undoubtedly represents a success that all Colombians, and the nations within the multilateral system, especially the members of the Security Council, have engineered.

We have reason to be proud and are thankful for that. At this point, no obstacle must be seen as insurmountable if Colombia is to continue advancing towards true and comprehensive peace with the rule of law. Of course, obstacles remain, and we must persevere in resolving every one of them.

The implementation of the agreement has made steady progress, and both the Secretary-General and his Special Representative are therefore clearly optimistic in their respective report and briefing, as are we. Colombia can tell the world that peace and reconciliation are possible when an entire country demonstrates the necessary political will and determination, and especially when it can rely on the support of the international community. During the conflict our society was hard hit by terrorist violence, painful kidnappings, child recruitment — as was mentioned today — and sexual crimes against many women, as Father De Roux Rengifo described. But we are a society that has suffered so much that it is determined to move forward to strengthen its institutions and improve the conditions for economic growth, education and employment that can ensure a prosperous future for its children and young people of today and tomorrow.

We feel proud that, as the Head of Mission said, Colombia elected a President for the second time — not for the first time, as was pointed out today — since the signing of the Final Agreement in 2016 in a transparent and free electoral process, which highlights the strength and stability of our democracy. The two final candidates in the second round committed to continuing the implementation of the agreement. Of course, as a woman, too, I feel tremendously proud that, for the first time, there will be an Afro-descendant Vice-President — still not a President. However, I agree with the representative of Mexico that we hope that Colombia will have the opportunity to elect a female President very soon. We are at a juncture with the new Vice-President, and we carried out a decent, respectful, supportive process with great hope for her success in that office.

We are also very proud of the fact that the implementation has not been suspended, but has advanced steadily despite the challenge of COVID-19, the disasters of climate change and, of course, the great concerns regarding price inflation throughout the world due to the most recent crisis. Amid such difficult circumstances, the Colombian economy was one of the fastest-growing economies in 2021, with a

gross domestic product growth of 10.7 per cent, and the second-fastest growing economy in the first four months of this year. According to yesterday's report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), it was also the leading economy where unemployment fell the most in the past four months out of the 38 OECD member countries.

Colombia's determination is clear: to overcome the conflict and irreversibly address the high levels of poverty and marginalization in some areas that clearly overlap with illicit crops. Not surprisingly, the 16 prioritized regions and the planning carried out with a territorial approach allowed for the development and completion of more than 1,400 infrastructure works and the design and planning of 3,354 new housing, transport, energy, aqueduct and drinking-water projects. Royalties will be allocated to those projects from non-conventional renewable energy and green-hydrogen projects, which our Government has prioritized, with national and foreign investments that have enabled a 100-fold increase in the existing capacity of non-conventional energy sources found at the beginning of our Government, and which will reach a 200-fold increase of that capacity by the end of 2023 thanks to the projects that this Government is already moving forward. Both those sources of royalties, as well as the national budget, should ensure the further implementation of the agreement and, of course, enable faster progress in all aspects related to the implementation.

I would like to mention that, for us, it is also a source of pride to have already handed over nearly half a million hectares of land to farming families, out of the 3 million mentioned in the agreement.

During the past three months, both members of the military forces and former FARC combatants have participated in hearings to acknowledge responsibility for crimes committed during the conflict and to ask for forgiveness from the victims. That does not mean that we have achieved full reconciliation, since the other source of violence that continues to fuel crime and instability in the territories, namely, drug trafficking, remains present, but the progress made should not be overlooked or underestimated.

The priorities are clear: Colombia must continue to qualitatively improve conditions for the reintegration of former combatants, while strengthening both the ordinary and the transitional justice systems included

in the agreement, to which end it is essential that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace present its conclusions as soon as possible and, of course, decide the consequences and penalties, but also, above all, the opening and prioritization of major cases concerning the recruitment of children and sexual violence in the armed conflict. As Father De Roux Rengifo said, the bodies of women cannot continue to be the battlefields of war for any armed actor, and neither can the recruitment of children continue unabated. We recently learned of the recruitment of 82 children by members of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional and other armed actors in Colombia.

With regard to socioeconomic reintegration, it has been a challenging process. There are more than 13,000 former combatants who continue to make progress in the various productive projects. Today we have 4,662 collective and individual projects, which link 9,412 people who are part of the reintegration — 7,018 men and 2,394 women — which, as Ms. Casso Piamba pointed out in her briefing, is very important. Those women, with their productive projects, are a source of livelihood for many families, but they are also a factor for stability in the territories.

For us, it is essential that such economic integration continue to progress, with economic guarantees for former combatants, issued by our Government in 2019, and increased resources to that end, already benefiting 13,263 people.

In the area of housing, the Government has continued to increase investments in support of former combatants who remain in territorial consolidation areas in an allocation of housing subsidies for a total of 944 housing units. For those who are outside the territorial areas, access routes to housing alternatives have been established.

Today 58 per cent of those in the reintegration process have access to primary, secondary and higher education, and 66.8 per cent of them have been linked to more than 6,500 training programmes for work. Today 98.9 per cent of those former combatants are covered by social security and health benefits. That is an unprecedented model in the world and is based on the approach implemented by the Council for Stabilization and Consolidation and the leadership of our President.

Justice is essential. The guarantee of non-repetition clearly requires that the justice system, both ordinary and transitional, improve its efficiency and flexibility,

in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16, which refers to fairer and more inclusive societies.

In that regard, we welcome the progress that the transitional system has made in its various components. As the report mentions, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has made progress in several of the major cases opened, and we therefore hope that it will soon hand down its first sentences. As Mr. Ruiz Massieu mentioned, consultations are under way to determine the work, tasks and activities with reparation and restorative elements, which will be part of the restorative sentences.

It is worth highlighting the recent adoption of the guidelines for the execution of the penalties and measures to contribute to reparation, which shows the importance of setting up a State institutional arrangement, mainly between the national Government and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, while respecting the competences of all the entities.

Undoubtedly, the visit of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in October 2021 meant recognition of the entire Colombian jurisdictional system in terms of the will, the institutional capacity and the resolve of our judges to comply with international standards, which guarantee respect for human rights and the effective and transparent application of justice. We have therefore managed to close that preliminary investigation, which lasted 17 years in the International Criminal Court.

The quest for truth must continue and has taken a decisive step forward thanks to the Truth Commission and the leadership of Father De Roux, in his presentation made on 28 June at an event that without a doubt was hugely symbolic for our country. The Commission worked with the full support of the Government of Ivan Duque; it is a non-judicial body that discharged its time-bound mandate, which was focused on investigating the events that occurred up until the peace agreement was signed. His report should serve to provide clear answers to the victims, who have had to wait so many years in the face of the immutable silence of their aggressors. They now can know by whom, where and why their loved ones were abducted, and hope can be returned to thousands of Colombian families.

That report has a key role to play in ensuring that all victims, without exception, from peasant families and from civil society, as well as businesspeople and

military and police victims — all victims — have access to the restorative truth that must serve to ensure that these horrors never happen again.

It is therefore vital, as we have asked, that all investigations carried out by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace continue expeditiously and that all necessary decisions arising from them be taken.

Father De Roux noted that it has not been possible in recent years to make progress towards what he termed a great peace. Such a great peace can be achieved on solid foundations not only of truth, as he said, but also of legality, which must go hand in hand with social progress, which our Government has pursued relentlessly through the creation of employment. We know that Colombians do not want paternalism or condescension; they want employment opportunities, which are vital to achieving that social peace, that peace with legality, that great peace.

Regarding security, I would reiterate once again that for the Government and all the bodies of the Colombian State, the safety and security of former combatants and their families is and will remain a priority. The goal is for there to be zero threats against them and, of course, zero deaths of former combatants.

We must reiterate that while we are doing everything necessary to develop the agreement, we should not delude ourselves into thinking that all other sources of violence are simply the result of non-compliance with the peace agreement or the result of Government indifference. Unfortunately, as we all know, the agreement did not guarantee the full identification of all drug trafficking routes or make it possible to deactivate the cartels that operate in Colombia, and of course in other countries allied with the Colombian cartels since before the signing of the agreement. For that reason, so long as drug trafficking continues, unfortunately, we must continue to live in the midst of and suffer death, bloodshed and much pain in Colombia.

Once again we urge the international community to engage in greater cooperation in the prevention of drug trafficking and in targeting drug trafficking revenues through tax havens, real estate assets and other financial assets. For all our countries without exception, drug trafficking is a source of instability and a threat to our citizens.

Colombia has been the primary victim of drug trafficking enterprises that are linked to transnational

organized-crime networks, which are very powerful. For that reason, 30 years ago drug trafficking became the primary *raison d'être* of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Ejército de Liberación (ELN) in our country.

Many have advocated that the next Government engage in negotiations with the ELN. My Government would be in favour of that as well, as were many in the past, but for those negotiations to take place the ELN must halt not only abductions but also the recruitment of children, and Governments must insist that any negotiations that are undertaken in future plug the loophole that existed in previous talks with FARC and demand information on all drug-trafficking routes and logistics so that future violence can be prevented in our country.

As such, we continue working every day through our military operations and through our police force to clamp down on drug trafficking. In recent military operations and the subsequent extradition of Otoniel, the leader of the Gulf Clan cartel, we could feel the support of the international community and of the United States. We carried out that extradition with conviction, but we also know that subsequently, actors with links to Otoniel waged armed violence affecting 178 municipalities, causing havoc for the civilian population and claiming the lives of 24 civilians, as well as countless attacks against our Government forces.

(spoke in English)

This is something I wrote while I was listening to some members, so I am going to read it out in English.

Of course, the Government must put an end to violence against social leaders. Obviously, our Government rejects any type of violence against the civilian population or ex-combatants. No democratic Government can remain indifferent to civilians, military police or any citizen deaths. But let me say that Colombian territory is vast and its geography diverse and difficult. Our presence on each square foot of our territory is just impossible. So any interpretation that there is a deliberate absence in some parts of the territory is unfair, as we know that it would also be absolutely unfair to assume that the deaths that occur in the schools or streets of large cities in developed countries, or the deaths of immigrants from Africa, occur as a result of indolence on the part of Governments. We know that that is unfair. All Governments have great challenges. Of course we have to improve State presence

throughout the territory, hence the importance of sincere international cooperation, sharing democratic values and our experiences and the lessons learned from our own challenges.

(spoke in Spanish)

The support of the Security Council for the implementation of the agreement requires greater cooperation among all nations to prevent the consumption and, of course, the trafficking of drugs, and in targeting illicit financial assets that are hidden not only in rural but also urban areas in developed countries, and, of course, in less developed countries such as our own.

On another front, on 27 January the Constitutional Court adopted a decision that has important repercussions on the security of former combatants. The Government filed an appeal against the judgment before the Court itself, which is currently being processed. As we await the resolution of that appeal, we have put together a special action plan that ensures the necessary inter-institutional coordination and addresses on an ongoing basis all the points of the Court's ruling. It involves also working in the long term with special police forces to improve conditions for the protection of all former combatants.

Regarding women, I should refer to one of the issues that in my view is of the greatest value for the construction of a peaceful society: ensuring true gender equality. That involves guaranteeing the presence of women not only in politics but also, and especially, their presence in the economy. So I warmly welcome the fact that Jineth referred to the work of our Government to guarantee the economic empowerment of women. In Cauca, Caldon and Caloto, all over Colombia we need women that have economic autonomy, because that is vital if we are to achieve greater levels of development, eradicate violence against women and, of course, eradicate the violence that prevails in various sectors of society.

As part of the implementation of the peace agreement, we are working on various fronts to guarantee the gender equality enshrined in the agreement. There are 3,265 women included in the reincorporation process, and 80 per cent of them are linked to productive projects, which also include spaces for caregiving, so that they can be incorporated into productive life without sacrificing their duties as mothers.

Of the 51 gender indicators, 26 per cent have already been completed, and 74 per cent have made significant progress. The average progress in implementing gender equity is 56 per cent but let us remember that it has only been five years; we still have 10 more years to go. This 56 per cent is far higher than what was thought possible just four years ago.

To promote significant participation of women in decision-making in organizations, it is necessary to continue raising awareness and providing training through different forms of partnership with cooperatives, which we have been prioritizing not only in the implementation of the agreement through Social Communal Economies, also known as ECOMUN, but also through our conviction that this is the way to lift rural communities out of poverty. It is through partnerships. Likewise, it is timely to continue strengthening all gender measures in the planning of productive projects and in the statutes of the different associative forms.

We may have differences in some of the data or figures reported, as reflected, for example, in comparisons of figures between time periods that are not comparable. But beyond any differences, we have the total conviction that comes with the commitment to unstintingly implementing the peace agreement so that we can truly fulfil all the commitments it contains, including, of course, the commitment to strengthening efforts aimed at peace, with the understanding that this work will remain forever part of Colombia's future.

As some Council members have pointed out, we Colombians have just elected a new Government, and of course, this new Administration must continue along the same path, strengthening institutions and the economy, providing legal guarantees and effective and efficient policies for all Colombians, supporting victims, doing the solid work of reincorporation and the voluntary substitution of illicit crops, which has been successful following four years of gigantic efforts in the development programmes with a territorial

focus, comprehensive rural development, the process of humanitarian demining, and the implementation of cross-cutting perspectives not only of gender but also of ethnicity. Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities have a priority in this implementation.

In the text of our Political Constitution, it is stated that

“Peace is a right and a mandatory duty”,

which is the true purpose of our society. The road we are travelling, with the understanding and help of the Security Council, is set with the intention of making this fundamental right effective, without which we will not be able to achieve better conditions of coexistence. We must continue to move forward through truth in legality and the conviction that all of us have that through a better democracy we will achieve permanent peace for Colombia.

Colombia is pleased to have presented this electoral result to the world, but more importantly we are pleased that we have given it to ourselves, with immediacy, transparency and absolute respect for the democratic decision of the Colombian people. That is why we have the moral authority to insist in all multilateral forums that we must urge for and permanently advocate the defence of democracy. We also must tell the Council that on 7 August our Government will turn over a solid and stable democracy with solid institutions, a stable democracy with a solid and stable economy to our successors. It is essential that the Security Council assist the next Government so that this democratic, institutional and economic solidity is preserved, so that Colombia may continue to move towards true peace and peace with legality.

I thank the Council very much indeed for the support it has given to our Government, and I thank its members for their always generous, friendly and sincere welcome extended to us in these meetings.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.