



Security Council

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Letter dated 16 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of the briefings provided by Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, and Mr. David Santiago Cano Salazar, Consultant of the World Wildlife Fund and Colombian Ambassador for One Young World; as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference convened on Tuesday, 14 April 2020. A statement was also delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) José Singer Weisinger
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by Special Representative of the Secretary-General
Carlos Ruiz Massieu**

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to present the latest report of the Secretary-General on Colombia (S/2020/239). I acknowledge the participation of Foreign Minister Claudia Blum de Barberi and Presidential Counsellor Emilio Archila, whose continued support for the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia is greatly appreciated. I also welcome Mr. Santiago Cano's participation in this meeting as a show of the Council's interest in and support for the role that Colombian youth are playing in the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace.

As in every other country, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is having a profound impact on Colombia, and the peace process will undoubtedly feel its effects. However, it is encouraging to see Colombians finding creative responses to this crisis and responding positively to calls for unity, as authorities at all levels take measures to contain the spread of the pandemic.

The implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace depends on constant engagement between the parties as well as key State institutions, civil-society organizations, partners from the international community and others. This engagement is no doubt more challenging in the context of the nationwide quarantine in place since 24 March and targeted actions such as the restrictions on access to the former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Nevertheless, the parties and other actors are adapting to this changing scenario to continue implementing the peace agreement and ensure follow-up on peace-related matters.

On 8 April, for instance, the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement met by videoconference to discuss the status of peace implementation, including the positive results of the work of the tripartite working group on accreditations, a mechanism that is constituted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) and the Mission. Importantly, the Commission agreed to institutionalize periodic meetings with the Special Forum on Gender and the Special High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples.

Also, the working groups of National Reintegration Council have continued to work through virtual sessions, and a dedicated working group on COVID-19 was recently created. The Technical Working Group on Health – which includes FARC, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, the Ministry of Health and the Mission – has taken measures at the national level to prevent the spread of the virus from affecting former combatants and defined a protocol to respond to eventual cases.

Yesterday, 13 April, the Senate resumed its official sessions virtually, and the Chamber of Representatives is scheduled to do so later today. On 2 April, I participated in the first session of the Senate Peace Commission's high-level mechanism to follow up on attacks against former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo members and social leaders and monitor prevention measures. The virtual session brought together senators from parties across the political spectrum, including FARC, as well as Ministers of Government, the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation and other high-level Government officials and representatives of State institutions, to analyse the violence affecting social leaders and former combatants and measures to stop it.

Also on that date, during a virtual session the National Reintegration Council approved three additional collective productive projects, bringing the total to 52. One of the approved projects is a textiles cooperative led by 11 men and 11 women former combatants, which has begun to produce protective face masks for the coronavirus response. Eight additional former combatants' cooperatives in other departments have also initiated efforts to produce face masks.

As for the Mission, we have also taken measures in line with our business continuity and contingency plans and maintaining our verification tasks in the field in line with the decisions from the national authorities. The country team is also developing programmatic support to the Government in its response to the pandemic.

On this we have to be clear. COVID-19 is and will continue affecting the implementation of the peace agreement and the Mission's verification activities. However, we have a collective obligation to continue to ensure progress in its implementation. Peace in Colombia cannot and should not be a casualty of this pandemic. In this sense, it is important to continue moving forward with the full implementation of the peace agreement, including on the three priorities that the Secretary-General highlights in his report.

The first priority is to adopt all necessary measures to protect social leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants. Violence against them continues unabated despite the national quarantine. Since the issuance of the report, three more social leaders and three more former combatants have been killed, for a total of 195 former combatants since the signing of the final peace agreement.

I am particularly concerned by the situation in Putumayo department, including that of women social leaders, crop-substitution leaders and former combatants. On 19 March, prominent social leader Marco Rivadeneira was killed after he was taken from a meeting he was leading regarding coca-substitution efforts in Puerto Asis municipality. Two weeks later, on 8 April, social leader Yuri Quintero was threatened, presumably by the same illegal armed group that killed Rivadeneira, and another female social leader, Jani Silva, whom I met last October, continues to be the victim of continual threats. On 27 March, former combatant Juan Carlos Castillo, who lived in the former territorial area for training and reintegration in that same municipality, was found killed. In a welcome development in the midst of this worrisome situation, on 9 April the Police captured Abel Antonio Loaiza Quiñonez, also known as "Azul", whom the Attorney-General's Office holds responsible for the killing and forced displacement of 11 social leaders and former combatants in this area.

I am also particularly concerned that over the past two days, illegal armed groups in Argelia, Cauca department, are threatening the population, including former combatants.

Just as Colombian actors are uniting to confront the pandemic, it is imperative for all actors to unite to end the epidemic of violence against social leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants. In particular, it is fundamental to enhance the effectiveness of the mechanisms created by the peace agreement, including the National Commission on Security Guarantees, which should make substantial advances in the design and implementation of a public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups; the National Protection Unit, which should advance in reviewing more than 400 pending requests for close-protection schemes; and the Special Investigation Unit, which requires increased support from all entities in order to fulfil its mandate of bringing the perpetrators of these attacks to justice, including intellectual authors. It is also key to improve security for close to 9,500 former combatants residing outside of former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including those

living in collective reintegration areas. The prompt implementation of the action plan of the Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders is key to ensuring protection for women leaders.

The second priority is to strengthen the foundations for the longer-term reintegration process and ensure that the benefits of reintegration reach all former combatants, regardless of where they live. The consequences of the pandemic make it even more crucial to pay particular attention to ex-combatants living outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration, as they have more precarious access to basic services such as clean water and sanitation. I also encourage the parties to work within the National Reintegration Council to specifically support collective productive projects that are more vulnerable to the economic consequences of the pandemic. These projects can help reactivate local economies, especially in remote rural areas that may be particularly affected.

It is also important to ensure that the reintegration road map is implemented in a collaborative manner between both parties, including the design of specific individual and collective road maps.

Finally, a third priority should be to ensure that communities, including especially victims, remain at the centre of peacebuilding efforts. In particular, the current context is an opportunity to undertake planning and consultations to operationalize the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations in the territories, an important part of section 3.4 of the peace agreement that, if implemented, can make an important difference on the ground. As the Secretary-General highlights in paragraph 92 of his report,

“The sustained and integrated presence of State institutions is necessary and remains the most effective means of ensuring peace and stability in the territories.” (*S/2020/239, para. 92*)

In this sense, I am encouraged that Presidential Counsellor Archila has continued to coordinate arrangements so that the implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus is not affected by the current crisis. I hope that similar measures are being taken in other aspects of the implementation of the comprehensive rural reform and the peace agreement more broadly.

Echoing the Secretary-General’s appeal for a worldwide ceasefire in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and joining numerous voices from Colombian civil society in recent weeks, I called upon all armed actors in the country to put life above any other consideration and focus on preventing the spread of the virus. The Ejército de Liberación Nacional responded by declaring a one-month unilateral ceasefire during the month of April. However, armed clashes continue between illegal armed groups in several departments, including Cauca, Chocó and Norte de Santander. At a time when all efforts must be focused on fighting the pandemic, we urge all illegal armed actors in Colombia to desist from continuing to perpetrate violence upon vulnerable communities, including indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

In conclusion, in his Nobel Prize in Literature acceptance speech, Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez said,

“Neither floods nor plagues, famines nor cataclysms, nor even the eternal wars of century upon century, have been able to subdue the persistent advantage of life over death.”

The resilience he invoked with those words has been seen in the way Colombians continue forging peace in their country after decades of conflict and in the way they have come together during the last few weeks in the face of the pandemic.

I trust that this commitment will continue beyond the pandemic so that the efforts to bring peace and development to conflict-affected communities are strengthened and reinvigorated as a result of the crisis. I am certain that through the constructive dialogue and dedicated efforts of the parties, public institutions, leaders at all levels and of Colombian society more broadly, we can celebrate in the end the triumph of hope over fear, unity over division and, as García Márquez said, of life over death.

Annex II

Statement by David Santiago Cano Salazar, Consultant of the World Wildlife Fund and Colombian Ambassador for One Young World

It is a tremendous honour to speak to the Council today to humbly offer some thoughts regarding the peace process in my country. I cannot claim to speak on behalf of Colombia's very diverse, passionate and active young population; however, I can speak from my personal perspective as someone who has witnessed the positive transformation of my country as a result of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace and who decided to get involved to help that peace flourish.

While I was not a direct victim of the conflict, I believe that all Colombians who lived through the conflict have suffered from the consequences of violence. I was born in Medellín during the drug-fuelled violence of the early 1990s to parents who struggled to support their children, like an average Colombian family. I remember, when I was growing up, the neighbours who were killed, the sounds of gunshots, the dead bodies on TV and the pervasive fear.

Because of this common legacy of suffering, I also believe that all Colombians have a responsibility to contribute to that peace that we have wanted for so long. With this belief in mind, when I was 21 I joined the non-profit organization TECHO, which mobilizes tens of thousands of youth volunteers to support vulnerable communities, including victims of forced displacement, through the construction of transitional housing and other social-inclusion programmes. I travelled across the country and heard the hopes and expectations that Colombian youth and conflict-affected communities had for a peaceful end to the conflict. The peace agreement with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) fulfilled many of these hopes, but it also raised expectations that violence would finally cease and that peace and development would finally come to rural Colombia. Today those expectations remain, and all of us must do our part to fulfil them, including by implementing the whole of the peace agreement.

In July 2018, I travelled with the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and a group of young leaders and entrepreneurs to the former territorial area for training and reintegration in Miravalle, Caquetá, to be the first visitors to a tourism project led by former combatants, in an area that was at the heart of the conflict for many decades. What I found profoundly moved me. Soldiers who only years before had the responsibility of fighting the FARC-EP were now fully devoted to their new responsibility of protecting their former adversaries. People from the local community were working together with the former combatants to get trained to be tourist guides. And I was very encouraged to hear from the former combatants their firm conviction in the peace process and in building new lives for themselves and their families.

Following that experience, I committed myself to supporting former combatants and their local communities with their productive projects. This past December, I mobilized youth volunteers to organize a fair in Bogotá for former combatants to sell their agricultural products and handicrafts, in alliance with the United Nations, the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and several non-governmental organizations. It was very inspiring to see people in one of our capital's most exclusive neighbourhoods buying products and interacting with former combatants, and all the initiatives surpassed their sales expectations.

One of the initiatives was the "Sabor La Esperanza" coffee from Cauca department. The brand name means "Taste of Hope", and I am going to send Council

members in New York some of this delicious coffee so that they can enjoy this taste of hope, peace and reconciliation.

We are now working to replicate that fair in other cities, and we also created a programme through which young entrepreneurs are mentoring these projects to provide them with technical advice. This is one of many examples of how Colombian youth are working to support peace and reconciliation.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the main challenges I see to the peace process in Colombia based on my personal observations and on conversations I have had with young people, former combatants, community leaders and others.

First of all, the economic impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic will be felt most by the most vulnerable. Steps must be taken to support them. The implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus should remain ongoing, as communities are expecting to reap benefits from these investments. I am particularly concerned about the productive projects of victims and former combatants. The young entrepreneurs who are mentoring former combatants in their product fair initiatives have reported that these former combatants are struggling because of reduced sales. Strong support for them is very important as they strive to weather this difficult storm. Their mentors are helping them come up with innovative ways of adapting, including online sales, gift certificates and the development of new products. We are very proud, for example, that the former combatants behind the Pazarela-TejPaz clothing project are now producing face masks for the COVID-19 response.

Secondly, the ongoing violence against social leaders remains one of the deepest wounds in our national conscience. It is a tragedy that has motivated young people across the country to mobilize in these leaders' defence. I recently participated in several sessions of the national conversation with a focus on young people, launched by President Iván Duque Márquez. Young leaders from rural areas discussed the intimidation they face, which limits their capacity to be agents of change. I was particularly shocked to hear a young Afro-Colombian woman from Chocó department describe how many of her friends do not participate in leadership forums or political spaces because they fear being threatened by illegal armed groups. Measures must be taken to guarantee the protection of young men and women leaders, so that brave people like this woman from Chocó do not have to fear for their lives when they are trying to speak up for their communities.

Thirdly, when I visit rural communities, I hear frequent complaints that the State is not present. Communities want and need teachers and doctors, roads and schools, investment and opportunities. Over time, Colombia's geography has created sharp divisions between the cities and the rural areas. Now that the conflict with the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) has ended, there is an opportunity for this Government and all future Governments to commit themselves as a priority to bringing State presence and investments to rural areas; indeed, it is their duty to do so.

In many of these rural areas, drug cartels and illegal armed groups have taken advantage of the vacuums created by the absence of the State to extend their control, including through the recruitment of children and young people. Let me be frank — as long as individuals continue to use cocaine, including those in many of the countries present in the Security Council, it is the young and the poor in countries like Colombia who will pay in blood, tears and suffering. Eradication is not the solution because that leaves poor farmers with little recourse for their livelihoods; rather, the solution is crop substitution and economic opportunities. I

have personally had conversations with coca-growing families and can guarantee that if they are given the right tools and market access, they would much prefer to grow coffee or cacao than coca.

Finally, as a young man, I am very proud of the fact that Colombia's final peace agreement incorporates actions to promote the participation of women, including support for women leaders and women former combatants. In every single peacebuilding or community effort with which I have been involved, success has depended on the equal participation of both men and women. All actors must recognize this truth and make real efforts to implement the gender provisions of the peace agreement.

Before concluding, I wish to thank the Security Council and the international community for their support for the peace process in Colombia. I thank them on behalf of young Colombians who are now growing up with less fear and greater opportunities. Since the peace agreement was signed, I have seen people who had been kidnapped by the FARC-EP during the conflict sitting down to talk with former combatants. I have seen police officers and former combatants competing together on the same team in the national rafting championships. I have seen young people from Colombian cities finally having the chance to visit rain forests that were previously plagued by war. None of this would have been possible without the peace agreement.

I thank the Security Council and the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations for this opportunity to address the Council. I hope the Council will continue in future to invite other young representatives to brief it. In every country on the Council's agenda, there are young women and men who are working hard to build peace and who have important contributions to make to the Council discussions.

I also wish to thank the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia for promoting youth participation in peacebuilding efforts. I thank the Colombian Government for holding a national conversation focused on youth and look forward to seeing concrete results from those discussions. I am also grateful for the openness of the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization in working on different youth-related initiatives; through it, we have completed some very fine projects so far.

As Council members know, the Secretary-General has called for a global ceasefire so that all of humankind can unite to fight the COVID-19 pandemic together. We should not have had to face a pandemic for the argument that weapons across the world need to be silenced so that we can focus on the greatest threats to our common survival, from climate change to transnational crime to poverty, to prevail. What happened in Colombia embodies this idea; the end of the conflict with the FARC-EP has allowed us to focus on the structural problems affecting our country.

Young people all over the world look to the Security Council to live up to its responsibility to promote international peace and security. I urge Council members to see the COVID-19 pandemic as a reminder that we are stronger when we are united and that all of us have a responsibility to accomplish the first objective set forth in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations Charter, namely, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", including mine.

Annex III**Statement by Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations**

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his insightful briefing and Mr. David Santiago Cano Salazar for sharing his inspiring efforts aimed at supporting the reintegration of former combatants. I welcome the participation of Colombian Foreign Minister Blum in today's meeting.

The comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace remains the way forward. The commitment demonstrated by the new subnational authorities is a welcome development. We encourage both parties to make full use of the mechanisms for dispute resolution created by the agreement.

While the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic raises an additional challenge to the peace process, we are encouraged by the parties' joint efforts to ensure continued implementation. Authorities have shown a strong initial response and are working to prevent the spread of the virus in vulnerable areas where former combatants are reintegrating into society. We welcome the announcement by the Ejército de Liberación Nacional of a unilateral ceasefire, which has added to the growing momentum of the Secretary-General's global appeal.

We remain very concerned about the consistently high level of violence against human rights defenders, social leaders and former combatants, as highlighted in the recent report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The safety needs of these individuals is to be guaranteed, and the peace agreement sets up mechanisms to this end. We call for further progress in operationalizing the comprehensive security and protection programme for communities and organizations in the territories. The launch of the action plan for the implementation of the Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders is an important step, yet resources sufficient for its implementation will be needed. We urge armed groups to refrain from violence.

We welcome the efforts aimed at reintegrating former combatants, in particular the progress made in financing and implementing the development programmes with a territorial focus. Rural reform and access to land remain key challenges, as does the shift in focus to the large majority of former combatants now living outside the concentration zones. We also welcome the agreement to make progress in humanitarian mine clearance through a collaboration among the Government, the United Nations and Humanicemos DH, a civil society organization that employs former combatants. We also remain concerned about the precarious situation of the children of former combatants, the recent cases of recruitment and use of children by illegal armed groups in some departments, and the situation of children still living in areas affected by violence.

Belgium pays particular attention to the process of transitional justice in Colombia and welcomes the progress in the cases launched by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. To meet the high expectations of victims, it is important that all actors fully contribute to the various components of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition.

In conclusion, we welcome the continued efforts aimed at bringing about peace in Colombia, despite the difficult environment. Belgium is strongly committed to supporting Colombia in addressing the remaining challenges in the implementation of the final peace agreement.

Annex IV**Statement by Mr. Zhang Jun, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations**

First, I would like to welcome the presence of Foreign Minister Claudia Blum. I also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Massieu and Mr. David Cano Salazar for their briefings.

Over the past several months, the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace in Colombia has continued to make progress. The inclusion of the peace elements in the regional development plans is very welcome. Meanwhile, the reintegration of former combatants in many frontier areas has forged ahead, including socioeconomic, educational, political and health. New development programmes have been approved. Reconciliation at the community level is moving forward.

The peace agreement is the biggest common denominator of all walks of life in Colombia. China concurs with the Secretary-General's observation regarding the three priorities of this year's work. It is particularly important to strengthen the development aspects, among which are rural reforms, development programmes, substitution of illegal crops, and so on. This is key to ensuring the long-term success of the peace agreement.

The Colombian Government has done a lot of work to mitigate the negative impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We appreciate the joint efforts of the Colombian Government and the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the areas where ex-combatants are reintegrating into society. China is trying its best to lend help to Colombia in fighting the pandemic. We recently donated a batch of anti-epidemic supplies to Colombia last week, and we will continue to offer our help in the future.

China thanks Special Representative Massieu and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, led by him, for their work. They have dedicated great energy to help implement the peace agreement. We hope that the Mission will continue to play its vital role, while respecting the sovereignty of the host country. The safety and security of United Nations field staff is another concern for us. Against the background of COVID-19, we hope that the mission will take care of its staff in accordance with resolution 2518 (2020).

As this year marks the fortieth anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Colombia, China will continue to work hand in hand with the Colombian Government and people in this extraordinary time. I believe that, with our concerted efforts, Colombia will achieve lasting peace, stability and development.

Annex V**Statement by Mr. José Singer Weisinger, Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic**

We thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi, for honouring us with her participation in today's meeting. We extend our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his briefing and to Mr. David Santiago Cano Salazar for his statement.

The Dominican Republic reiterates its support for the peace process in Colombia and commends the Colombian people for their commitment to lasting peace in the country, especially at this time, when the world is facing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

We recognize the challenges faced and the progress made in the period under review, in particular the measures taken by the Government and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia to stop the spread of the virus and continue with the implementation of the new working methods for the reintegration areas created for the former combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP).

As we are all aware, transitional justice is essential for reconciliation and lasting peace. We welcome the progress made by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and urge all those subject to its jurisdiction to continue to contribute to its truth-seeking efforts.

Nevertheless, we regret the acts of violence that have been recorded in some areas of the country owing to the presence of illegal armed groups. We strongly condemn the ongoing attacks against human rights defenders, civil society leaders and former combatants of the FARC-EP, in particular women, including those of Afro-Colombian and indigenous origin, and we urge that special measures be put in place to meaningfully take into account their security needs. We encourage the parties to guarantee a safe and violence-free environment for the civilian population and ensure the prompt implementation of the action plan of the Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders.

The Dominican Republic underscores the need to continue efforts in the area of socioeconomic reintegration, particularly those aimed at improving security for the 9,500 former combatants residing outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including those living in collective reintegration areas.

We emphasize the importance of strengthening and expanding the reintegration programmes and join the Secretary-General in urging all parties to make use of the National Reintegration Council and take concrete steps towards finalizing the reintegration road map. In this context, Mr. Cano Salazar's statement attests to how crucial the participation of young people in peace and security efforts is to the implementation of the peace accord.

Accordingly, we would like to applaud him for his efforts aimed at supporting the reintegration of former combatants of the FARC-EP, including through social and economic reintegration programmes, which reflects the work being carried out by the United Nations Verification Mission in partnership with young people in support of the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda.

Finally, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, we are cautiously optimistic about the response of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), namely, to declare a one-month ceasefire for

the month of April. We urge ELN members to continue to take positive steps towards sustainable peace and security in conflict-affected areas.

I will conclude by reiterating our support for the Government and the people of Colombia, and for the United Nations Verification Mission, in their pursuit of lasting peace and security in the country.

Annex VI

Statement by Mr. Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations

Allow me to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his informative briefing and express Estonia's continued support for the activities of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and for the work of the Special Representative. We welcome Her Excellency Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia.

We welcome the Colombian Government's continued commitment to ensuring the implementation of peace-related programmes. The growing global pandemic of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which has also reached Colombia, threatens to make the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace much more challenging. We support the efforts made by the Government of Colombia to combat the coronavirus pandemic and we welcome the announcement by the Ejército de Liberación Nacional of a unilateral ceasefire as a positive step towards the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire in order to help save lives.

We are pleased by the positive steps taken in the implementation of the peace agreement, especially by the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. It is important that the victims be at the centre of efforts. We encourage continuing to move forward with the implementation of the agreement despite the challenging context of COVID-19.

We welcome the firm commitment of the vast majority of former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo to the peace process. Ensuring a comprehensive transition is important to reintegrate former combatants into society with dignity and to strengthen the foundation for the long-term process.

Challenges remain. We stress our concern about the continuation of violence against community leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants. According to the latest report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, killings of women human rights defenders increased by almost 50 per cent in 2019 compared to 2018. We call on the Government of Colombia to reduce impunity and guarantee that all human rights violations are duly investigated and alleged perpetrators prosecuted.

To reiterate, we urge the Government to take all necessary measures to stop the tragic killings of social leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants. The National Commission on Security Guarantees should be convened more regularly in order to fulfil its full role in line with the peace agreement, particularly concerning dismantling the criminal groups behind most of this violence.

Lastly, protection measures need to be extended to former combatants outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration, including new areas of collective reintegration.

In conclusion, we encourage all parties to continue to cooperate in a constructive spirit. We would like to express Estonia's strong support for the comprehensive implementation of the peace agreement.

Annex VII**Statement by Ms. Anne Gueguen, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations**

Like others, I would like to start by extending a warm welcome to the Colombian Foreign Minister, Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi. It is an honour to have her participate in this virtual meeting. It is also a pleasure to welcome a representative of the Colombian youth, Mr. David Santiago Cano Salazar. I also express my country's sincere appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his briefing and for the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations system as a whole in the country.

The first preliminary comment I would like to make is that France believes that cooperation between the United Nations and the Colombian authorities, including in the promotion of human rights and in the fight against drugs and crime, is essential. We hope that this cooperation with all United Nations agencies will continue and will be strengthened in the coming months.

As elsewhere, and as eloquently highlighted by previous speakers, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic constitutes a serious challenge in Colombia. It is a quadruple challenge at least: a health challenge, a humanitarian challenge, a socioeconomic challenge as well as a challenge to the implementation of the peace process. In this regard, I would like to express the solidarity of France with Colombia in the fight against the pandemic and commend the Colombian authorities for reaffirming their commitment to peace in this difficult context.

The positive attitude of the recently elected local and regional authorities towards the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace is also an important and positive signal. We welcome their efforts to incorporate peace implementation in their governing agendas. Like all other members of the Council, France fully supports the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire. In Colombia, too, it can contribute to renewing the momentum for long-lasting peace. The one-month ceasefire announced by the Ejército de Liberación Nacional must be fully implemented and prolonged. We call on all other armed groups in Colombia to follow this path.

What we have highlighted many times in previous meetings remains true: achieving the full implementation of the agreement as a set of interconnected provisions is critical to the long-term success of peace. As the Secretary-General says in his observations, the focus must shift towards the sustainability and comprehensive nature of the process. In this regard, I would like to recognize the positive steps observed in recent months in the field of reintegration, for instance with the agreement among parties of the reintegration road map, which sets out the long-term framework for the socioeconomic reintegration process. These joint efforts must now continue, with a specific focus on former combatants who reside outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration. It is important to overcome the long-standing issue of access to land. The progress accomplished through the development programmes with a territorial focus is also important and should continue with a view to fully implementing the comprehensive rural reform set out in the peace accord.

Another area where further progress is expected is the illicit crop substitution programme, which represents a huge hope for thousands of families. It is crucial that this programme receive the resources necessary to operate, in particular to finance the alternative productive projects that are a prerequisite for its long-term success. In this area, we wish to commend the work of the United Nations in Colombia.

A third topic that deserves praise and support is the work of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition.

A fourth issue, which is a matter of serious concern that is highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/239), is the tragic killings of social leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants. This trend remains of great concern. No efforts must be spared in putting an end to these killings, in a context of even greater isolation owing to the COVID 19 crisis, and in bringing those responsible to justice. Making full use of the tools provided for in the peace agreement remains the best way to make progress. Special attention should be given to the rights and protection of women, children, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals and persons belonging to minorities.

France counts on the Colombian authorities to strengthen efforts to ensure the State's presence, civilian as well as military, throughout the country, including in the most remote areas, in consultation with civil society.

I would like to conclude with the hope of furthering peace, including in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The support of France for the Colombian Government and people on the demanding road to peace remains unwavering.

Annex VIII

Statement by Mr. Jürgen Schulz, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

Let me first of all extend a very warm welcome to Her Excellency the Foreign Minister of Colombia, Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi. Let me also thank our two briefers for their very insightful and comprehensive briefings.

With regard to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, we very much welcome the Colombian Government's commitment to ensuring the continued implementation of peace-related programmes in this difficult context. We also welcome the swift manner in which the Government and the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) have taken preventive actions for the former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Balancing the consequences of COVID-19 is an extremely challenging task, and the stakes are especially high with regard to the peace process.

It is therefore encouraging to hear that the implementation of the peace process is now also being pursued through a wide range of virtual meetings and conferences. At the same time, it is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic will have consequences for the implementation of that process. It is therefore all the more important to do everything possible to keep the political momentum alive and on track. It is good to hear that Colombian actors are united in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the peace process, I would like to make three more specific points.

First, the security situation in general remains worrisome, especially in rural areas, as we have also heard today from our briefers. Social leaders and human rights defenders who support the peace agreement, indigenous leaders and women's rights defenders, as well as former combatants, continue to be at particular risk. We are very concerned about the recent killings that we have once again heard about today. We therefore fully concur with the Secretary-General that no efforts must be spared with regard to those facing specific risks, given their roles in the promotion of human rights and the implementation of the peace agreement, and those who laid down their weapons and remain committed to the peace process. We would therefore very much like to encourage the Government to make full use of the existing bodies and institutions to ensure security for those individuals and their communities. It is crucial to extend the presence of State institutions to remote and conflict-affected areas in order to end impunity and create a secure and stable environment for all Colombians.

The second point concerns the reintegration of former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo. We very much welcome the progress made in reaching consensus between the Government and FARC on the reintegration road map, and we encourage the parties to continue to work jointly in the spirit of constructive dialogue during its implementation. Now that the transition of the former territorial areas for training and reintegration is under way, the focus must shift towards ensuring the sustainability and comprehensive nature of the process. In that context, we would also like to recall that more than two thirds of all former combatants reside outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration, and are therefore facing even greater challenges in terms of security, basic services and productive opportunities.

My last point is about support for the institutions of the peace agreement. The impressive work of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition gives rise to the hope that Colombia can overcome a deeply entrenched legacy of conflict and achieve true reconciliation. Its autonomy remains crucial, and

we would like to echo the Secretary-General's call on all actors to contribute fully to the system's work, including by being forthcoming in contributing to the truth and empathetic acknowledgement of the suffering of victims, whose voices must indeed be at the centre of the peace process.

Before concluding, let me say that we remain confident that Colombians can succeed in consolidating the peace that they have begun to build. Its fully comprehensive peace will ultimately have to include the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) as well. In that context, we welcome the ELN's announcement of a one-month unilateral ceasefire. While we regret to note that violence continues in some regions, we nevertheless hope that this could be and will become a point of departure for future constructive engagement that leads to more confidence-building measures and, in the end, to future negotiations. The international community will continue to assist Colombians in realizing their aspirations for a more peaceful future. We commend the key role that has been played by the United Nations Mission and the United Nations agencies working in Colombia.

Annex IX**Statement by Mr. Muhsin Syihab, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations**

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his detailed briefing. I also thank Mr. Cano Salazar for his briefing and for his contributions in the implementation of the peace agreement.

This briefing takes place at a very challenging time, but we must continue to show our solidarity and support to the Government and people of Colombia. Indonesia takes note the unilateral ceasefire announcement made by the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. We hope this ceasefire will lead to a permanent ceasefire and contribute to lasting peace in Colombia. Having said that, let me make three brief points.

First, we strongly welcome the efforts made by the newly inaugurated regional and local administrations to incorporate peace implementation in their agendas. We also welcome the acceptance by the governors of the national Government's proposal to create a peace office in departmental governments towards ensuring dedicated resources for the implementation of peace-related programmes. From Indonesia's experience, local administrators, supported with adequate resources, play an instrumental role in the peacebuilding process.

The fact that former combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) took part in the formulation of the local development plans is also a major, and encouraging, development. Looking ahead, we believe that in the long run, this element of territorial-peace focus will be fundamental.

Indonesia therefore encourages all relevant parties to provide necessary support to ensure the sustainability and success of these programmes.

This relates to my second point, on the long-term reintegration strategy. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation that all relevant parties must start to shift focus to strengthen the foundation for a longer-term reintegration process. We continue to call on all relevant parties to redouble their efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the reintegration road map as a comprehensive and sustainable long-term framework. As the reintegration road map itself was agreed between the parties, it is imperative that they work jointly to deliver on their individual commitments in its implementation.

That brings me to my last point, on ensuring that the benefits of these programmes reach all communities that have suffered from decades of violence. As pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/239) and by Special Representative Ruiz Massieu, with more than two-thirds of former combatants residing outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration, it is equally crucial to devote attention to their concerns and specific needs.

We have always believed that capacity-building and technical support, along with projects geared towards economic self-sufficiency, would contribute positively to creating a conducive environment for the peace agreement. But the fulfilment of socioeconomic needs alone is far from enough. Additional efforts are needed to guarantee the safety and security of all. In this regard, we welcome the launching of the action plan and road map to protect human rights defenders and community and social leaders, and urge their effective implementation.

Furthermore, we welcome the efforts of relevant units in Colombia, to provide protection for former FARC-EP members and to bring the perpetrators of the killings to justice. It is crucially important to extend the presence of the State to the people.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak will pose many challenges for Colombia over the coming months. But with the Government's commitment to the implementation of peace-related programmes, as well as the continued support of the Council and the United Nations system, I am confident that together, we will prevail.

Annex X**Statement by Mr. Dmitry Polyanskiy, First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations**

We welcome the personal participation in this video-teleconference meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi. We are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for his presentation of the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/239) on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. Our thanks also go to the other briefer, Mr. David Santiago Cano Salazar.

In our view, the document presented by Mr. Ruiz Massieu reflects quite accurately and in detail the current state of affairs with regard to the realization of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace.

Of course, the current global situation has complicated a lot of things for all countries and poses new challenges to the efforts of Governments to address people's needs. It is the most serious test of the ability of Governments across the globe to protect their populations and economies.

In the case of Colombia this task is even more complicated: apart from fighting coronavirus disease, the Government also needs to deliver on the implementation of the final peace agreement. A lot has been done to make the long-awaited peace in the country possible, but there is also a long way ahead in order to guarantee its sustainability through ensuring that the needs and aspirations of all segments of society are met. Furthermore, the most efficient way to identify and address those needs is through inclusive, peaceful and constructive dialogue.

Peace is a common effort and responsibility, in which each national player has a part. We are encouraged by the popular appeals in Colombia in support of peace in line with the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire, including the announcement made by the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. Today's challenging times are the moment for all Colombians to make an extra effort towards peace and dialogue.

The United Nations presence in the country plays a significant role in helping Colombians verify the implementation of the final peace agreement, as supported by the Security Council and the Secretary-General. The Mission already verified the completion of arms cache extraction and the laying down of weapons in 2017, thus completing the first phase of its presence, and moved to the second phase, namely, verification of the implementation of Government programmes.

There is a list of tasks to accomplish in order to build a solid foundation for lasting peace. The most pressing, of course, are the security guarantees for the population. We, as everyone, are very much concerned by the killings of former combatants and social leaders, as well as by the growing number of those who are forced to leave their homes owing to security concerns. All those incidents have to be investigated and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Without a doubt, the population should see peace dividends in everyday life. This task highlights the need for gains in the political, socioeconomic and legal reintegration of former combatants, as well as for firm progress on agricultural programmes and reforms and the creation of employment opportunities. Obviously, such programmes will require proper financing.

Due attention should be given to public discussion of the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. This central element of the final peace agreement

should maintain its full independence. All attempts to influence it should be thoroughly investigated.

We hope that all of these tasks are to be the focus of the national and newly elected local authorities and that the Mission will continue its efforts to assist Colombians in implementing the provisions of the final peace agreement.

Annex XI**Statement by Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations**

It is an esteemed privilege to deliver this statement on behalf of the African members plus one (A3+1) — the Niger, Tunisia, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. We extend warm greetings to Her Excellency Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi, Minister for Affairs of Colombia, and thank both our briefers this morning.

The A3+1 welcomes the decision of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) to heed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We hope that this decision will culminate in a permanent ceasefire and re-open channels for constructive dialogue. We also laud the decision by the Government to continue implementing the peace-related programmes despite COVID-19. Additionally, we call on the international community to support Colombia in fighting the pandemic.

The Colombian peace process remains a global exemplar of bringing together parties that have been divided by a deep-rooted social and political history, including extreme violence. As Colombians strive for lasting peace, we stress the importance of the comprehensive implementation of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. We remain encouraged by the spirit of compromise exhibited in reaching the final peace accord and by the progress highlighted in the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2020/239). In that regard, we wish to reiterate that the only viable sustainable solution to the conflict in Colombia remains in the implementation of the peace agreement and an inclusive political settlement that is nationally led by, and in the interests of, the people of Colombia. The peace process is at a critical stage, and neither Colombians nor the people of Latin America and the Caribbean region can afford for it to relapse.

In view of the foregoing, the A3+1 makes the following points.

First, we urge all stakeholders to comply with their obligations and make full use of the follow-up mechanism, the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Agreement, to deepen dialogue and settle differences. Furthermore, we welcome the measures effected as part of the comprehensive rural reforms, particularly the road map for stabilization and the development programmes with a territorial focus.

Holistic rural reform, including agricultural and land reforms, access to economic projects for former combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and the implementation of the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, is paramount for the social and economic transformation of the rural communities where violence and social inequality are prevalent.

Equally, we urge the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization and the National Reintegration Council to address delays in the allocation of lands, as well as the situation concerning former combatants residing outside of the territorial areas for training and reintegration. These outstanding issues are crucial for the collective social and economic reintegration of former FARC-EP combatants. We also echo the call by the Secretary-General for strengthening efforts towards longer-term reintegration, with benefits made available to all former combatants, which will ultimately determine the long-term sustainability of peace in Colombia.

Secondly, we welcome the advances within the transitional justice mechanisms. We support the full implementation of all aspects of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition aimed particularly at ensuring

that communities and victims of the conflict are priorities in the peace process. Furthermore, we commend the efforts thus far in addressing the accreditation of former FARC-EP combatants and implore the authorities to build on the momentum in order to resolve the legal situation of those individuals pending definition. In that context, we welcome the continued progress with regard to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, within the principles of transitional justice, aimed at promoting justice, reconciliation and sustainable peace. Hearing the different views and versions of events of all communities in Colombia will ensure that the road to peace is based on an inclusive political process.

The A3+1 remains concerned that women, including former combatants, continue to face significant challenges in their enrolment in educational and training programmes owing to structural limitations surrounding childcare and employment. We reiterate our view that women have been instrumental in the peace process and are central to its success, and we call for their increased, safe and unhindered participation in it.

Thirdly, the A3+1 is disturbed by the continuing acts of violence, particularly against social leaders, human rights activists and the most vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, women and children. We condemn the assassination of indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders, as well as former FARC-EP members. We acknowledge the progress made by the Special Investigation Unit in the investigation of several cases of killings of former FARC-EP members, and we welcome the launch of the road map for the effective protection of social leaders from the departments with a view to tackling violence against communities, social leaders and human rights defenders. We also renew our call for the strengthening of institutions, thus guaranteeing the safety of the most vulnerable groups, for preventative actions and prosecution and for regular meetings of the National Commission on Security Guarantees.

Finally, we observe with distress the forced recruitment and displacement of children and adolescents, sexual violence, the presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance, and the interruption of education services owing to the actions of illegal armed groups and crime syndicates. It is fundamental that our most vulnerable always be protected, and as such, we encourage the Government to redouble its efforts to combat these scourges.

In conclusion, the A3+1 reaffirms its support to the Government and the people of Colombia in their pursuit of lasting peace, as well as to the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the country team in assisting with the comprehensive implementation of the final peace agreement. We reiterate: the onus of a successful peace process remains on the Colombian people. Furthermore, it is important that the parties remain committed and that they strengthen efforts to implement the peace agreement in order for communities to continue to benefit from a more peaceful and secure environment, particularly in the context of the spread of the global pandemic.

Annex XII**Statement by Mr. Jonathan Allen, Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations**

Thank you to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the report (S/2020/239) and his briefing today and to Mr. David Santiago Cano Salazar for his inspiring and wide-ranging briefing on reintegration. I very much look forward to the coffee that we have promised. Let me also welcome Foreign Minister Blum de Barberi to the Security Council today.

Let me start with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which is on our minds as we look across the range of Security Council business. I will begin by saying to the Minister that we very much recognize the challenge that this crisis poses to Colombia. It was therefore heartening to hear your Government's assurances in the President's "stay at home" message of 24 March that the implementation of the peace agreement will continue and to see the measures implemented jointly by the parties to limit the spread of the virus and ensure continued service provision for former combatants. Let me also say that we welcomed the announcement of a unilateral ceasefire by the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. The group's fulfilment of this commitment would facilitate efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, potentially and hopefully representing a step towards constructive engagement around a lasting peace. In addition, let me also express appreciation to you, Mr. Ruiz Massieu, and to your team for all your efforts to continue and adapt your work in the face of the COVID-19 challenge.

We have also seen progress on implementation of the peace agreement. The continued roll-out of the development programmes with a territorial focus demonstrates the Government's commitment to working with local authorities to ensure that implementation reaches conflict-affected areas. Similarly, local authorities' own incorporation of peace-related considerations into their development plans is encouraging. Furthermore, reintegration of former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) continues, including efforts to ensure sustainability of reintegration processes both in and outside the former territorial areas for training and reintegration, and we hope to see further efforts on the outstanding issues of access to land and the needs of women former combatants. It was heartening to hear from Mr. Cano Salazar about his personal experience of some of those issues. How important and impressive it was to hear about one community's adaptability to COVID-19 by creating face masks to help tackle the crisis. Finally, let me welcome the ongoing activity by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, especially to increase the participation of victims in its proceedings; we hope the pace of its important work can be maintained.

However, I should also note some areas of concern that require urgent efforts in order to build on progress made.

First, as we have mentioned in previous meetings, we are seriously concerned about the continuously rising numbers of killings of human rights defenders and other activists, including women leaders. I think we all remember our visit to Colombia last year and the real concerns over safety that were expressed to us by the community leaders whom we met. That was an overwhelming takeaway from our visit. Now, the launch of the action plan under the comprehensive programme to safeguard women leaders and human rights defenders was a positive step towards addressing this issue. We recognize that COVID-19 may necessitate adjustments to the plan, but we urge the Government to be flexible and to ensure that the plan soon becomes reality, especially as individuals who rightly stay at home to combat COVID-19 are

potentially more easily targeted for attack. Similarly, protection measures for former FARC-EP combatants inside and outside former territorial areas for training and reintegration should be strengthened, as that population continues to face security issues. I think this is reputational for Colombia.

Secondly, while we recognize the many challenges involved in implementation, we also note that mechanisms to address many of these challenges already exist. The National Commission on Security Guarantees is one such mechanism, and we encourage its more frequent convening and engagement with civil society. Use of other mechanisms for dialogue between the parties would also ensure that disagreements are constructively addressed and overcome and would send a positive signal to all stakeholders about the parties' credible commitment.

Lastly, the Special Representative's report emphasizes the need to keep communities at the heart of implementation. That means ensuring community participation, from process design through to implementation and follow-up and from rural reform and development plans to crop substitution and security. Local authorities, civil society — including women's organizations — and other community stakeholders have been most affected by conflict. They are also a source of local knowledge, capacity and commitment. It therefore makes sense for them to be at the centre of efforts to secure and sustain peace.

Let me conclude by saying that, in these uncertain times, the United Kingdom recognizes that the challenges Colombia faces are great. We need to retain this bright spot on our agenda. But this means that the need for lasting and inclusive peace is even greater. The United Kingdom continues to support the Colombian Government in its efforts to achieve this crucial goal.

Annex XIII**Statement by Mrs. Kelly Craft, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations**

I thank Mr. Ruiz Massieu and Mr. Santiago for their briefings. I also wish to welcome Foreign Minister Blum to the Security Council today. We are very glad to have everyone joining us.

The United States stands with Colombia as we all confront the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This being a personal commitment for me as well, as when I visited Colombia back in November, I would be remiss not to compliment and acknowledge Colombia's behaviour and their full treatment of respect and acknowledge the dignity that they gave everyone, including refugees and displaced persons in the country. They treated them as family. And Colombians should know that they are a part of our family. The United States Agency for International Development is providing \$8.5 million to help Colombia respond to the pandemic, and this assistance will help monitor the spread of the virus, provide water and sanitation supplies, manage cases and more.

The rise in COVID-19 cases is worsening an already-fragile humanitarian situation, and it is stretching available health and social services for vulnerable populations. This includes more than 1.8 million Venezuelan refugees and other displaced persons living in Colombia. We welcome President Duque Márquez's call for solidarity with, and support for, Venezuelans in Colombia at this extraordinarily difficult time. Amid these challenges, we welcome the steps taken by the Government of Colombia to ensure the continued implementation of peace accord programmes, and its cooperation with regional and local Governments, including officials who recently assumed their posts.

However, we must reiterate the urgent need to protect Colombia's human rights defenders, social leaders, ex-combatants, rural communities and other vulnerable populations that have been most affected by ongoing violence. Criminal groups have targeted several high-profile social leaders in recent weeks, coinciding with the onset of COVID-19. Ending this violence is essential, and those responsible must be held accountable. We note Colombia's continued progress in counter-narcotics efforts, and reiterate our commitment to continued partnership with the Duque Administration to combat the destructive illegal drug trade. The Trump Administration stands fully engaged with the Government of Colombia to reduce coca cultivation and cocaine production, extend State presence and promote integrated rural development.

We know that significant challenges remain. Implementing rural reforms, reintegrating ex-combatants across the country and ensuring that victims of conflict continue to be heard, including through Colombia's transitional justice mechanisms, will not be easy steps, but they must be taken.

Allow me just a moment at this time of crisis to reflect back on the beginning of my statement — on complimenting the progress that the Colombians have made and to let them know that, once again, that the Trump Administration will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Government and the people of Colombia as they advance towards peace and prosperity.

Annex XIV**Statement by Mr. Dang Dinh Quy, Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations**

At the outset, I warmly welcome Her Excellency Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, to this video-teleconference meeting.

I thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, and Mr. David Santiago Cano Salazar, Consultant of the World Wildlife Fund in Colombia, for their informative and important briefings. My delegation wishes to make the following observations.

First, in the period under consideration, Colombia witnessed positive developments, with the inauguration of all newly elected governors, mayors and members of municipal councils, including former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) on 1 January, and the process of drafting departmental and local development plans for the next four years. We also welcome the continued positive steps in the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, including the integration of former combatants.

In that regard, we highly commend the developments in Colombia that have brought hope for more security and stability. We welcome and believe that, with sustained efforts from the Government and departmental and local authorities, such progress will contribute to better promoting security and the livelihoods of the people, especially in conflict-affected regions.

Secondly, we also welcome the announcement by the Ejército de Liberación Nacional of a one-month cease-fire starting on 1 April to facilitate Colombia's response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We join the call by the Secretary-General for other armed groups to follow suit and to implement a lasting cease-fire towards a conflict-free Colombia for peace and development. In that connection, we call on the United Nations, its Member States, international organizations and all parties in Colombia urgently to take preventive measures needed in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

Thirdly, we share the concerns expressed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General that, despite the recent developments, the FARC and the Government of Colombia still have differences regarding the compliance with their obligations under the Final Agreement. We encourage the Government and the party to continue to engage in constructive dialogue, utilizing mechanisms at hand, to avoid mistrust and rhetoric that may hinder the smooth implementation of the peace process. We stress the importance of ensuring the national reconciliation process through high-level dialogue as the only viable solution to finally put an end to the conflict and overcome long-term challenges in Colombia.

Fourthly, violence and attacks continue against communities, as well as killings of former combatants, human rights defenders and social leaders, the perpetrators of which are reportedly linked to illegal armed groups and criminal organizations. We condemn all such attacks and urge all the groups involved not to repeat such acts of violence, so as to contribute to the improving situation in Colombia.

Fifthly, we support the priorities the Secretary-General identified in his most recent report (S/2020/239). As the Government works closely with local authorities and other relevant players to put a stop to the killings of former combatants, human rights defenders and social leaders, the root causes of failure of reconciliation and long-term peace must be unceasingly addressed. The reintegration of former

combatants should be implemented in a comprehensive and sustained manner to ensure the benefits of reconciliation reach them all. Development plans also need to take into account the particular needs of communities.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our strong support the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia in supporting the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. We call upon all parties concerned to set aside differences at this critical juncture, lest the COVID-19 pandemic have further adverse impact on the process of peace, security, national reconciliation, national unity and development in Colombia.

Annex XV**Statement by Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia**

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this Security Council meeting. For Colombia and all countries, it is essential that the United Nations continue to work on its pillars and mandates, especially in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global crisis and its serious challenges.

On behalf of President Iván Duque Márquez, I wish to express our gratitude to the members of the Security Council for their ongoing support to my country. I also take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his report (S/2020/239), as well as his Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for his important work in Colombia. I welcome the briefing by the representative of Colombian youth. In our public policies for sustainable development and peace with legality, young people play a central role as both participants and beneficiaries of actions.

In the first quarter of 2020 our country faced numerous challenges. Among them I highlight our efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, I note the exodus of 1.8 million Venezuelans who have settled in Colombia and require humanitarian and social care. I take this opportunity to thank all the countries that are providing us meaningful cooperation to help us face those challenges.

Even amid these circumstances, President Duque has reaffirmed his determination to pursue the peace with legality policy in order to advance and fulfil our commitments to victims, ex-combatants and the communities and families covered by the policy, including those who participate in voluntary illicit crop substitution programmes.

We have made progress in consolidating the 16 development programmes with a territorial focus in the 170 municipalities most affected by violence and poverty. The implementation of those programmes, which are also essential for comprehensive rural development, is now backed by the new regional and local authorities who took office in January.

After several meetings with the national Government, the new governors and mayors are incorporating the peace with legality policy into their agendas and territorial planning instruments. By the end of February 166 municipalities and 15 provinces had approved such instruments.

I would now like to refer to the two mandates of the Verification Mission, the first of which is the reintegration of ex-combatants. The report notes the country's significant progress in this area. President Duque has emphatically reaffirmed that since he took office, 20 months ago, the sustainability of the reintegration process has been decisive in preventing new cycles of violence.

We have also made progress on complex issues related to the legal situation of the former territorial areas for training and reintegration. Approximately \$4 million have been allocated to the acquisition of the land they currently occupy. At the same time, several municipal councils are seeking to incorporate those areas into their land-use planning to facilitate income-generating and housing projects. Decisions about those areas are being made through inclusive processes.

Food supplies and the payment of utilities, leases, health insurance and childcare continue to be guaranteed for more than 13,000 accredited ex-combatants. The Government remains committed to expanding their access to income-generating projects and to educational and job-training programmes. As the report notes, the Government adopted the social and economic reintegration route that was approved

in the National Reintegration Council. That framework applies to ex-combatants residing inside and outside the former territorial areas.

The second issue is our biggest challenge: guaranteeing the safety of ex-combatants, human rights defenders, social leaders and vulnerable communities. State institutions as a whole have strengthened their actions and coordination in three areas: increasing the effectiveness of prevention and protection, expediting judicial investigations and combating criminal organizations responsible for attacks.

The safety of former combatants and their families, as well as that of members of the current Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) political party, is a priority. The peace with legality policy establishes the coordination of security measures. Over 40 security and protection measures are being adopted as a manifestation of the State's commitment to the safety of ex-combatants. They do not replace or affect any of the provisions under the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace.

A total of 3,740 members of the police and the military ensure the safety of those ex-combatants settled in the former territorial areas. The national protection unit provides robust security measures to protect 300 ex-combatants. By presidential order, measures such as rapid-reaction initiatives, information centres, rewards, new risk-analysis methodologies and self-protection training have been established.

Similarly, the National Commission on Security Guarantees has been working to strengthen protection and security policies. The Commission has met 15 times and has considered civil society proposals and differentiated approaches on ethnicity. In that context, the action plan of the Intersectoral Commission on Security, Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders was launched. The plan emphasizes the role of women in peacebuilding, in line with resolution 1325 (2000).

In addition, the Government is finalizing the formulation of a plan to ensure the safety of the people participating in the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops.

As for the judiciary, the Public Prosecutor's Office has made progress in the investigation of 102 of the 223 incidents reported since 2017 of ex-combatants as victims. That represents 46 per cent of the cases. As a result, there have been 24 formal convictions and 178 arrest warrants have been issued for murder, attempted murder and enforced disappearance, including 51 related to intellectual authors.

To put an end to those crimes and threats, the Government is acting on a crucial front — combating organized armed groups dedicated to drug trafficking and illegal mining. Those groups use violence to control trade routes for their illegal production, while threatening vulnerable communities.

Colombia continues to suffer the consequences of the rapid increase of illicit crop areas between 2013 and 2017, which reached an unprecedented 200,000 hectares of coca plantations. As a result of President Duque's commitment, that trend was halted in 2018 and again in 2019. Our Government will not rest until we suppress those crops, as it is clear from our history that the main fuel for violence in Colombia is drug trafficking.

I would like to refer briefly to a matter that exceeds the mandate of the Verification Mission. On 29 March, the terrorist armed group Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) announced a unilateral ceasefire. It is worth noting that the so-called "active" ceasefire by the ELN is actually partial, because they maintain that they would attack in certain cases. President Duque has reiterated that the ELN must demonstrate its commitment to peace through concrete actions such as the release of kidnapped citizens and the cessation of all criminal acts.

The 2016 Agreement envisages a 15-year time horizon for its implementation. It is important to stress that its implementation is a two-way process and requires the effective commitment of both the State institutions and the FARC political party. The Verification Mission strongly requests FARC to make progress in its pending matters, including providing information on drug trafficking routes, cooperating in the location of missing persons, handing-over assets for the reparation of victims and helping establish truth and justice for victims..

The peace with legality policy is an ambitious medium- and long-term strategy. Various State agencies are working together to stabilize the territories, bridge gaps and promote social progress for the communities most affected by violence and poverty. We trust that we can continue to count on the Security Council's support in advancing the consolidation of well-being, peace and the rule of law in Colombia.
