



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8639th meeting

Thursday, 10 October 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Matjila (South Africa)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Ugarelli
Poland	Mr. Radomski
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
United States of America	Mr. Cohen

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/2019/780)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 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/2019/780)

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 warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, to participate in this meeting.

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/2019/780, 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/2019/780). I welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, and Mr. Emilio Archila, Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, and thank them for their support of the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

The peace process has continued to move forward through a challenging period since the last briefing (see S/PV.8581). Two years after the successful conclusion of the laying down of arms by the former guerrillas of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-

Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), the vast majority of former fighters remain engaged and committed to the Final Agreement for the Termination of Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace. Thousands of former fighters are pursuing academic studies, receiving vocational training, participating actively in cooperatives and employed in activities related to the peace agreement. More than 3,500 combatants are involved in collective and individual productive projects, ranging from agricultural ventures to clothing manufacturing to ecotourism.

It is important to emphasize the commitment of these former combatants to the peace process, especially given the regrettable and unjustified actions of a few former FARC-EP commanders, who recently announced that they have taken up arms again. I would like to recognize the swift and categorical rejection of these actions by all sectors across the country, including the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) political party, which has expelled those who took up arms again, and certainly by President Duque Márquez and his Government. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace also declared that all those who announced their rearmament would be excluded and lose the benefits provided under the peace agreement. It is now more important than ever to support the women and men who remain resolutely committed to peace and to transforming their lives and those of their families and communities.

Important results have been achieved in the approval of productive projects by the National Reintegration Council, but further efforts are needed given that the projects that have thus far received Government funding represent 14.7 per cent of the accredited former combatants. It is critical to accelerate the pace of disbursement of funding and to guarantee access to land. Additionally, it is fundamental for all actors to ensure that these projects become sustainable so that former combatants and surrounding communities can see lasting results from their hard work. All reintegration efforts should involve and benefit local communities, as well as empower women. I welcome that all productive projects approved by the National Reintegration Council include a gender-sensitive approach. I trust that both parties will work together to move forward in their implementation.

I am pleased to report that the Government has temporarily extended the monthly allowance, the provision of food and services and the presence of

public security forces around the former territorial areas for reintegration. The decree regulating that transition was adopted on 9 September, although specific details are still pending. I welcome the announcement by the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation of the extension of the monthly allowance and food services until August 2020.

Now I would like to draw the Council's attention to the situation of more than 8,000 former combatants living outside the former territorial areas, who have limited access to reintegration benefits and are more vulnerable to violence and to recruitment by illegal armed groups. More should be done to support that population.

(spoke in Spanish)

Last week I was in the department of Putumayo, a region where more than half of whose residents are registered as victims of the conflict and yet have not received the full benefits of the signing of the peace agreement. I met with several women social leaders and it was very inspiring to see the courage and strength with which they exercise leadership on behalf of their communities and work for territorial peace, despite the many obstacles and threats to their lives.

The situation of those admirable women is a reflection of the situation of thousands of leaders, human rights defenders and communities that continue to be victimized by violence. In this and all my visits to the territories, the same messages are heard. Communities clamour for development, basic services, security and economic opportunities through comprehensive State presence. In addition, they call for immediate strategies to improve protection and security in the regions, in cooperation with communities and local authorities. That is, undoubtedly, the promise of the peace agreement.

Part of the solution to address this worrying situation lies with the National Commission on Security Guarantees, which was convened by President Duque in August and is tasked with formulating, with input from civil society, a public policy for the dismantling of criminal organizations and their support networks. It is essential that regular discussions be held on this issue and that their decisions be translated into concrete actions that, in the short term, protect all communities and consolidate State institutions in the affected areas.

(spoke in English)

Unfortunately, I must report that attacks against former FARC-EP combatants continue to be of serious concern. Since my last briefing to the Council, 20 former combatants have been killed, for a total of 151 since the signing of the peace agreement. There has been some progress in the implementation of various measures announced by the Government to strengthen security guarantees for former combatants and to step up investigations into those killings. But more needs to be done, including to address the continued budgetary shortfalls faced by the entity in charge of providing protection to former combatants.

The departmental and local elections are less than three weeks away, and violence against candidates is affecting political parties across the ideological spectrum, including FARC, which is participating in local elections for the first time. Protection measures for all candidates should be strengthened.

I welcome the National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign, signed in August by 12 national political parties, rejecting violence and calling for a peaceful and respectful campaign. It should certainly serve as an example of how dialogue can lead to consensus. Dialogue is also key to overcoming challenges in the implementation of the peace agreement. I encourage the Government and FARC to continue to engage constructively, as seen during the joint visits to the former territorial areas.

In the same spirit, I hope that they make increased use of the architecture established for that purpose under the peace agreement, especially the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement. Constructive dialogue that is inclusive of FARC should also be reflected in any further discussions on reforms related to provisions of the peace agreement, to the extent that such discussions continue. It would also be important to ensure that any such reforms have only future applications, as Foreign Minister Holmes Trujillo García has previously emphasized to the Council.

On 26 September, 10 former FARC-EP commanders appeared before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace to acknowledge their responsibility and to ask for forgiveness for kidnappings committed during the armed conflict. This was also an important step in the implementation of the provisions of the peace agreement that are aimed at ensuring accountability,

truth and reconciliation. The willingness of Colombia's victims to embrace forgiveness is inspiring. In that connection, the Truth Commission plays an essential role in fostering truth and reconciliation by bringing the victims to the forefront. Victims must continue to be at the centre of the peace process.

This a precious opportunity to put an end to the recurrent dynamics of violence in Colombia. The United Nations remains convinced that the way forward is through a comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement. Advancing rural development and political participation, just to cite two examples, is as important to consolidating peace as reintegrating former combatants. I have heard this conviction repeatedly expressed in the rural areas of Colombia by community activists, local authorities, peasant women and indigenous leaders.

The hopes of Colombians for a peaceful and prosperous future can be realized if we all — the Government, FARC, Colombian society as a whole and the international community — work together to ensure that the letter and spirit of the peace agreement become concrete deeds and actions to improve the lives of those who have suffered the most from the conflict. The unified support of the Security Council for the peace process will continue to be of the essence. The United Nations Verification Mission, along with the country team, which has played a key role in supporting different aspects of implementation, is ready to continue doing its part to help consolidate peace.

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

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make a statement.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): As this is the first time I am speaking in the Chamber this month, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency and our Russian colleagues for the presidency in the month of September.

It is very good to have the Foreign Minister of Colombia with us once more. He is very welcome. It is always good to have him here and we appreciate the seriousness with which he takes the Council's consideration of this important mission. My thanks as well to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I think we all know that we are meeting almost three years since the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace was signed in November 2016, and significant progress has been made since then. Transitional justice institutions have gained more stable ground, programmes for the substitution of illicit crops are under way and thousands of ex-combatants are being reintegrated into civilian life. And there have been other advances.

The progress, however significant, though, has been met with a number of serious challenges. The recent announcement by former leaders of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) that they were returning to armed activity was an obstacle. We have to admit that, but we should not let it overshadow positive steps forward. We condemn the dissidents' rejection of the peace accords, but at the same time welcome the swift response by the Colombian Government, the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) political party and the transitional justice system, among other stakeholders. It remains clear — and this is welcome — that the majority of former FARC-EP combatants remains committed to the peace process.

Of course, we must guard against complacency and step up efforts to ensure that currently manageable threats like those do not escalate, worsen and spiral beyond our control. Therefore, rather than calling broadly for the implementation of the agreement, which is customary at these meetings, I would like particularly to respond to the request made by President Counsellor Archila, who is in the Chamber today, regarding the Council's recent trip to Colombia for us to be more specific in our appeals.

First, we recognize the political and financial challenges facing the Colombian Government, but we believe that sufficient funding for rural development in the 170 municipalities benefiting from development programmes with a territorial focus is essential to deliver the accords. Adequate resources should also be made available to the transitional justice system and reincorporation process, as these are crucial for public and ex-combatant trust in the peace process and, therefore, to ex-combatants' continued participation in it. Increased State presence in rural areas will assist in addressing ongoing security issues, not least the killing of former FARC-EP members, community leaders and human rights defenders, as has been discussed in the Council before.

Secondly, I would like to underscore the importance of the parties' renewed high-level engagement with vital spaces for dialogue, including the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, the National Commission on Security Guarantees and the National Reintegration Council. These mechanisms have been less active recently, but they serve an important purpose in maintaining communication and coordination on the accords.

Looking ahead to emerging developments, on 27 October Colombians will vote in regional and local elections — a milestone on the road to peace, especially given the strong regional focus of the peace agreement. The Secretary-General's report (S/2019/780) highlights worrying statistics on candidates being threatened and killed. In that regard, we welcome the signature of the new National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign. We call on all stakeholders to adhere to the Pact, to refrain from violence and intimidation and to ensure a peaceful election.

The United Kingdom commends the Colombian Government for the progress made so far amid challenging circumstances. We look forward to continuing to provide support along Colombia's road to sustainable peace.

Mr. Ugarelli (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Ruiz Massieu for his informative briefing and welcome Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Foreign Minister of Colombia, and Mr. Emilio Archila, Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation, whose continued presence at these meetings reflects the importance that the Government of Colombia attaches to the Council's support of the peace process.

As this is possibly our last intervention on the issue, which is so close and important for Peru, I would like to recall our first intervention in the Chamber (see S/PV.8154), when we recognized that, although the implementation of the peace agreement would be a complex process with numerous challenges, we trust in its future with conviction and hope.

Today, we reiterate our confidence in the Colombian Government and people in their commitment to peace and to continuing to implement the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace in a comprehensive manner, including

by strengthening State presence and through comprehensive rural reform, the crop-substitution programme, legal and security guarantees and the social and economic reintegration of former combatants. The Government's continued efforts to implement the "peace with legality" strategy and development programmes with a territorial focus through a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to reintegration are consistent with that commitment, as is the transition process in the territorial areas for training and reintegration, the development of productive projects, collective and individual alike, access to land and effective integration into local communities.

It is also important to strengthen support and protection mechanisms for more than two-thirds of former combatants who reside outside of the territorial areas for training and reintegration, while taking into consideration the specific needs of women and young people, as well as rural, indigenous and ethnic communities. The killings of former combatants and social leaders, exacerbated by the ongoing regional election campaign, mean that better schemes must be put in place to protect candidates and apprehend those responsible and bring them to justice.

Upholding commitments, such as the National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign, signed in August in the presence of President Iván Duque, is also vital. The Pact ensures respect for political opponents and seeks to ban violence during electoral campaigns. In that context, because we are also affected by the actions of criminal groups, we reiterate our categorical rejection of the announcement by Iván Márquez and a small group of dissidents to return to arms. We trust that this petty decision will not undermine the commitment of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común and that of other former combatants to peace. Those involved will have to answer for their actions before justice and history.

The contribution made by the institutions of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition to the peacemaking process must be recognized, as they play a fundamental role in ensuring accountability, legal security and reconciliation and in honouring the memory of the victims.

Lastly, we highlight the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, both in Colombia and in New York alike, for the dedication, professionalism and excellence with which it discharges the mandate

that was unanimously renewed by resolution 2487 (2019) on 12 September.

The peace process in Colombia must continue to set a good example for the world. To that end, Colombia will always have the support of Peru and, we are sure, of the Security Council and the international community.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo García for being here. It is an honour to have him in the Security Council once again.

We also thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, for his informative briefing on the report of Secretary-General (S/2019/780).

We reiterate the interest and support of the Dominican Republic in and for the peace process in Colombia and welcome the determination and sacrifice of the Colombian people in the process. Since the signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, Colombia has set the example for peace. Two years after the signing of that historic agreement, Colombians have left behind more than half a century of violence, held peaceful and inclusive elections and developed transitional justice institutions.

We welcome the efforts of President Duque Márquez and his Government to advance the process of reintegrating former combatants who have laid down their weapons. We acknowledge the progress made and challenges seen during the reporting period, in particular in implementing the “peace with legality” strategy and in launching the development programmes with a territorial focus, which are aimed at reintegrating former combatants and guaranteeing their security. It is vital that projects aimed at reintegrating former combatants be sustainable. We encourage former combatants to remain involved in the peace process. At the same time, we call on the National Reintegration Council to strengthen its initiatives and projects, as this is a crucial time to extend professional training to those who wish to lay down their weapons.

Social reintegration is a pillar of the peace process. We therefore request that attention be paid to the more than 8,000 former combatants who reside outside of the territorial areas for training and reintegration,

with special focus on those of indigenous and Afro-Colombian origin and those with disabilities.

We commend the Government of Colombia for launching the Zonas Futuro strategy, which are Strategic Zones of Comprehensive Intervention, led by civilians, in partnership with the private sector and local communities supported by international cooperation, monitored by the Verification Mission.

The Dominican Republic firmly condemns the decision taken by some former combatants to return to arms, which is a blatant violation of the 2016 peace agreement. We reiterate that violence cannot be a legitimate method of defending political positions of any kind. We also condemn incidents, some fatal, that occurred in connection with the upcoming local elections and encourage the Government to take additional security measures in preparation for those elections. It is essential to ensure that the elections are not disrupted.

In spite of the circumstances, young Colombians remain committed to peace. We acknowledge the vital role played by Colombian youth in implementing the agreement and breaking the cycle of violence in the country. We therefore commend the Verification Mission and the Colombian Government for their efforts to include young people and youth organizations in the decision-making process and in implementing the Agreement.

Similarly, we believe that it is important that we be regularly informed about the implementation of the agreement at the local level so as to ensure that women, including those of African descent, of indigenous origin and those who live in rural areas, are included in the transitional justice and reconstruction mechanisms.

Lastly, we call on the international community to support Colombia’s peacebuilding efforts, while maintaining a focus on the future.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his briefing. We are also very glad to welcome Foreign Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo García and Presidential Counsellor Archila to the Council again today.

The 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace remains an inspiration to all of us and is a reminder of the enduring value of aspirational leadership. The United States will continue to support the United Nations Verification

Mission in Colombia and we recognize the Colombian Government's commitment to the Mission.

On the subject of aspirational leadership, we are encouraged by the efforts of President Duque Márquez to expand the Government's presence in conflict-affected areas and to bring hope to vulnerable populations through justice, security and opportunities for legitimate economic activity. Those efforts represent welcomed progress. President Duque and his Administration have also shown admirable resolve by expanding counter-narcotics efforts and working towards our shared goal of halving coca cultivation and cocaine production by the end of 2023.

That resolve has produced modest but noteworthy results. Coca cultivation is estimated to have slightly declined in 2018 and the United States welcomes that news. However, while we understand that lasting peace is the work of decades, not days or weeks, several hurdles have slowed the implementation of the peace accords to a worrying pace. We note that some two thirds of former combatants still reside outside territorial areas for training and reintegration. A smooth transition period is needed, as the legal status of those areas has expired.

We also remain deeply concerned about the reports of violence against human rights defenders and social leaders, as well as political candidates across the ideological spectrum. Particularly in the light of the upcoming elections, Colombia's first nationwide local elections since the peace accord came into effect, we reiterate our support for the Government's efforts to protect leaders and ensure that they can safely conduct their vital work. With security in mind, the United States applauds the recent signing of a national non-violence pact, with President Duque and Special Representative Ruiz Massieu as witnesses. We urge all parties to honour the principles of that pact. We are also alarmed by the information in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/780) that participants in crop-substitution programmes continue to be the target of threats, attacks and killings. We call on the Colombian Government to ensure their protection and boost economic development in areas with significant coca cultivation. The people of Colombia need viable alternatives to that crop. They need visible paths to dignity if they are to pull themselves out of an economic cycle that ultimately funds violence and impunity.

The Colombian Government's commitment to the equal dignity of all people is especially evident in its response to the crisis in Venezuela. The Government is currently hosting 1.4 million Venezuelan refugees and other displaced Venezuelans, driven from their homes by the chaos and violence sown by Maduro's illegitimate former regime. It is even granting citizenship to thousands of Venezuelan children born in Colombia. Colombia has also shown leadership by supporting interim President Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's legitimate leader. We are grateful for Colombia's leadership and generosity, and we want to be clear today that the United States is equally committed to peace in the country and the region.

But we cannot merely endorse aspirational leadership as we address these challenges. We must practice it. That is why we have provided more than \$214 million in assistance to manage the effects produced on Colombia by Venezuela's man-made crisis. It is why yesterday in Washington our Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, welcomed Foreign Minister Trujillo and High Commissioners Archila and Ceballos to a high-level dialogue. It is also why Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan, United States Agency for International Development Administrator Mark Green and Presidential Adviser Ivanka Trump visited Colombia in September for the launch of initiatives designed to empower women and enhance economic development.

The United States is committed to envisioning and realizing a better future for all Colombians, and we look forward to continued partnership with Colombia and its continued progress in implementing the peace accord.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, and Mr. Emilio Archila, Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization and Consolidation. We also thank Special Representative Carlos Ruiz Massieu for presenting the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/780).

We agree with previous speakers that the peace process is at a critical stage. We greatly appreciate the contribution of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia to the post-conflict peacebuilding. We know that the support of the United Nations is warmly welcomed by all stakeholders in Colombia, including the Government, the parties to the peace process, the country's indigenous peoples and civil society as

a whole. That speaks to a high level of trust in the international staff and their objectivity. Needless to say, however, the main responsibility for the peace process lies solely with the Colombians themselves, and not on any external actors. And judging by today's report, despite a certain amount of progress that has been made, the greater part of the work of consolidating peace in the country is still to be done.

The fact that various participants in the peace process have returned to armed combat shows that not everyone in the country is happy with the progress made in implementing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. The Secretary-General warned about such risks in previous reports, and it is currently reported that a further 8,000 participants are at risk. The situation is creating increasing concern and once again shows that the peace is not irreversible. However, we want to emphasize that armed confrontation is unacceptable. A consensus in Colombian society can be achieved only through a broad dialogue without preconditions and within a legal framework. Resorting to violence in order to resolve political differences is impermissible. That also applies fully to the run-up to the elections. We are naturally disturbed by the information in the report that there have been 54 cases of electoral violence during the reporting period, including seven murders, five attacks, two abductions and 40 death threats.

Besides the emergence of new threats to the Colombian peace process, there are also a number of existing challenges requiring urgent solutions. There are still complex and knotty problems involved in ensuring the safety and security of participants in the peace process and civilian activists, and in order to address them, the presence of State authority in areas distant from the capital has to be strengthened. Progress must also be made with humanitarian mine-clearance programmes and agricultural reform, a key element in the peace process, as well as the implementation of crop-substitution programmes.

It will be important to strengthen public trust in the peace process, and that requires more active promotion of programmes for the legal, socioeconomic and political reintegration of former combatants and the creation of jobs for them. In that context, we share the view expressed by Cuba and Norway, the guarantor countries of the Colombian peace negotiations, in their joint communiqué of 30 August.

The decision to end negotiations and return to the forced suppression of rebels from the Ejército de Liberación Nacional in the wake of the terrorist attack on 17 January has introduced additional problems. While we condemn the attack unequivocally, we also believe that without a dialogue with the group it will be impossible to achieve lasting peace in Colombia. We call for resolving the differences with Cuba regarding the negotiators there and for compliance with the guarantees established under the protocols of the signed agreement.

In general, we want to emphasize once again that the consolidation of peace in Colombia can be achieved only through the comprehensive and consistent fulfilment by all Colombian stakeholders of their obligations under the final peace agreement. We believe that should continue to be the Government's priority and at the centre of public discussions. We fully support the Secretary-General's call for all disputes to be resolved within the framework of existing legal mechanisms, and for any new legislative initiatives to be subject to broad public discussion. Only in this way, step by step, can Colombia consolidate its society and thereby create lasting peace.

As far as the views on the impact of external factors on the Colombian peace process are concerned, we believe that it was the Colombians themselves who reached the key agreements on peace in their country after decades of internal armed conflict. It was the Colombians themselves who assumed their national responsibility for their country's fate and committed to the path of the peace process. That commitment to peace has become an exemplar of responsibility and a source of pride for the Security Council, and we hope it will continue.

We are pleased with the assurances of commitment to the peace process, but Colombia cannot rest on those laurels. The international community, the United Nations, the Security Council and, most importantly, the Colombians themselves expect the Colombian Government to comply strictly with its obligations. Without that, we can never consider the internal armed conflict a thing of the past. We hope that the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia will continue to play a meaningful role in the peace process.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): I would first like to thank the Special Representative Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his briefing and to extend a very warm welcome to

His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García.

Germany is in full agreement with the thrust of the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/780). I would therefore like to limit my remarks today to a few aspects of the overall picture of the implementation of the peace agreement and some more specific issues.

I think it is important to note at the start that the implementation of the peace agreement is still a success story, albeit not without setbacks. We strongly condemn the decision by a group of former commanders from the Fuerza Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) to take up arms again, but we welcome the immediate rejection of their announcement by the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) party and the widespread expressions of commitment to the peace process from former combatants across the country. We also very much welcome President Duque's reaffirmation of his commitment to reintegrating the vast majority of former combatants who laid down their weapons in good faith and remain part of the reintegration process. It is now even more important to redouble our efforts and accelerate the implementation of the peace accord in a comprehensive way to prove the FARC-EP dissidents wrong.

Council unity and engagement on Colombia remain equally important and must be preserved, particularly if and when the peace process is faced with obstacles. The support of the international community has helped Colombians realize their aspirations for a more peaceful future. In that regard, let me commend the key role that is being played by the United Nations Verification Mission and agencies working in Colombia. Let me also underline that Germany will also continue to strongly support Colombia on its way to sustainable peace.

Among several other specific aspects relating to the implementation of the peace agreement, one is obviously the reintegration of former FARC-EP members. Following the expiration of the legal status of the territorial areas for training and reintegration, we commend the Government for its responsible handling of the transition and the FARC for its constructive role. We welcome in particular their joint visits to the territorial areas.

However, we also call on all actors to pay more attention to the situation of the more than 8,000 former combatants who reside outside the former territorial

areas for training and reintegration and face even greater challenges in terms of security, basic services and productive opportunities. In the context of the reintegration of former FARC-EP members, we are also convinced that even more attention needs to be paid to the implementation of the gender provisions of the peace agreement, and the same applies to young people. In that regard, we would like to commend the Mission for its youth, peace and security strategy and regular reporting on the issue.

A second more specific point concerns providing support for the institutions of the peace agreement. The extremely valuable work of the Truth Commission, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and the Unit for the Search for Persons deemed Missing in the Context of and Due to the Armed Conflict gives hope that Colombia will be able to overcome the deeply entrenched legacy of conflict and achieve true reconciliation. The independence and proper functioning of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the other components of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition are of crucial importance. Reforms that may lead to a growing sense of uncertainty about their legal status among former fighters could be seriously detrimental to the consolidation of the peace process.

With regard to the relevant institutions and the issue of funding, which other colleagues have also mentioned, it is important to ensure that all Ministries and entities entrusted with the implementation of the peace process receive adequate funding. Therefore, we very much welcome the fact that the proposed budget includes a 15-per cent increase for the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition.

In connection with the security situation, which remains concerning, especially in rural areas, social leaders and human rights defenders who support the peace agreement and the resulting policies, such as land restitution, continue to be at particular risk. We are also worried that indigenous leaders, women leaders and women's rights defenders are facing additional security threats. The elevated number of killings that Mr. Ruiz Massieu mentioned in his briefing obviously remains alarming, especially within the context of the upcoming holding of local and regional elections, which might lead to further tensions. Therefore, we also welcome the signing of the National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign by 12 political parties.

Lastly, we encourage the Government to extend the presence of State institutions to remote and conflict-affected areas in order to create a secure and stable environment for all Colombians.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the participation of Foreign Minister Trujillo García and thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu for his briefing.

The peace process in Colombia is key to achieving comprehensive peace and stability in the country. It also affects regional security and development. The Colombian Government is committed to promoting the peace process and has made enormous efforts in many areas, such as strengthening national institutions, advancing comprehensive reforms and reintegrating former combatants. China commends the significant progress that has been made.

The full implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace is also facing multiple challenges. In his report (S/2019/780), the Secretary-General indicates that the security situation in certain parts of the country remains precarious, with former combatants and social leaders exposed to security threats. The full implementation of the peace agreement is a long-term, systematic project, involving many political, security, development and social integration aspects. It faces complex challenges.

We hope that the Colombian Government and the parties concerned will resolutely stay the course, cherish the hard-won peace process, prioritize the full implementation of the peace agreement, conduct inclusive political dialogue, speed up socioeconomic reconstruction, enhance mutual trust through dialogue and promote peace through development.

Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ruiz Massieu and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia have significantly contributed to promoting the peace process in the country, which China commends. We hope that the Mission will work on the basis of respect for Colombia's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, further enhance communication among all the parties in the country to create synergies and push for more results from the peace process in Colombia. China stands ready to work with other Council members and contribute to promoting the peace process and achieving comprehensive peace, stability and development in Colombia as soon as possible.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buyswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his briefing and welcome the presence of Foreign Minister Trujillo García among us today.

We acknowledge the progress made in the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace over the past three months, as the Secretary-General has indicated in his report (S/2019/780). We particularly welcome the success achieved in the areas of reintegration and the initial implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus.

Belgium condemns in the strongest terms the call by a small number of former commanders of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) to take up arms once again. History will bear witness to the gravity of their error. Every party and sector of society were quick to condemn that decision. As an indication of the strength of the agreement and the peace process, the overwhelming majority of former FARC-EP members continue to respect the agreement and to work towards their reintegration as law-abiding Colombian citizens. In that regard, we acknowledge the positive and inclusive efforts to find a solution with regard to transitioning from the former territorial areas for training and reintegration and call for specific and practical measures to be formalized in a spirit of constructive cooperation as soon as possible.

In general, it is important to strengthen and solidify trust and cooperation with regard to the implementation of the final agreement. The parties have everything to gain by taking advantage of the consultation, monitoring and verification institutions and mechanisms established to that end. Comprehensive and renewed implementation is predicated on additional progress, particularly in terms of the extension of State presence in conflict-affected areas, including access to public services, as well as the launch of rural reforms, including with respect to access to land — the lack of which is one of the root causes of the conflict.

I commend the three components of the transitional justice system for their work and reiterate the importance of the independence and autonomy of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. In addition to transitional justice, the increased funding of which I welcome, every Government entity responsible for implementation must receive adequate funding. We also welcome the

leadership of the Colombian authorities in the area of the reintegration and protection of children, but we remain concerned about the increase in the recruitment and use of children, as well as sexual violence, by non-State armed groups.

The security of social leaders, human rights defenders and former FARC-EP members must be strengthened and guaranteed, in particular during the holding of elections, by focusing on the conflict-affected areas. We regret the fact that 24 former FARC-EP members have been killed in the past three months.

Belgium stresses the importance of protecting all candidates and their families, taking into account the specific challenges faced by women candidates. Progress has been made in the implementation of the comprehensive programme of guarantees for women leaders and human rights defenders, but it must be equipped with adequate resources to ensure access to preventive and protective measures. The most recent presidential elections were the most peaceful in the country's recent history. Peaceful local elections would serve to reveal that peace has its dividends. In that regard, the National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign is a welcome initiative.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Belgium's strong support for the full implementation of the peace agreement and the positive role played by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. The unanimous adoption last month of resolution 2487 (2019) to extend the mandate of the Mission demonstrates what the Council can achieve when it is united. In the same vein, we call on all parties and Colombian society to foster consensus and combat polarization in order to build a better future.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the participation of His Excellency Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, in this briefing to discuss the political situation in Colombia. His presence reflects the special attention that his Government is giving to that issue. We commend Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, for his comprehensive briefing.

My country notes with satisfaction the progress made, with the support of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, whose mandate

was renewed on 12 September at the request of the Colombian authorities, in the implementation of the "peace with legality" strategy since President Iván Duque Márquez's took power one year ago. In the context of the forthcoming local elections, my delegation welcomes the signing of the National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign, which reflects the commitment of the stakeholders to banning violence and holding peaceful debates during the electoral campaign. In order to ensure the success of the electoral process, Côte d'Ivoire urges the Government to strengthen security measures for all candidates.

We also welcome the efforts that have been made by the Government and other parties, including the approval of productive projects, the launch and implementation of development programmes with a territorial focus and the reaffirmed determination and commitment of the Colombian authorities to reintegrating ex-combatants. My delegation further commends the actions of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace with a view to focusing particular attention on the rights of victims and its excellent work with regard to the transition process in the territorial areas for training and reintegration. We also welcome the spirit of cooperation of the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) members.

My country notes with concern that, despite significant progress, major difficulties remain with regard to the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. Those include the climate of insecurity, the lack of resources for the financing of projects and the inadequacy of the social measures aimed at reintegrating former FARC-EP combatants. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire encourages the Government to redouble its efforts to undertake resolutely the appropriate political, socioeconomic, land and judicial reforms in order to guarantee lasting peace. If the process is to be successful, it will require the allocation of appropriate financial resources to the various structures involved in the implementation of the peace agreement, together with the proper coordination of actions. It is also crucial to ensure the dismantling of criminal group networks in the most vulnerable areas and to initiate investigations to determine the perpetrators of crimes, particularly the perpetrators of targeted killings.

My delegation is concerned about the announcement made on 29 August by Luciano Marín Arango, also

known as Ivan Márquez, former leader of the FARC-EP, on behalf of a group of dissidents of former FARC-EP combatants to return to arms. The effective implementation of that decision would undermine peace and reconciliation efforts in Colombia, deal a serious blow to any peace process and send a bad message a few weeks before the regional and municipal elections of 27 October. Côte d'Ivoire believes that, in a context of regional tensions, renewed fighting between the military forces of Colombia and a dissident group of former FARC-EP combatants would certainly aggravate an already worrying security situation. We therefore call on the leaders of that dissident group to remain committed to the peace process and to sustain the hope created by the various agreements that have been reached. We also urge all stakeholders to redouble their efforts in their respective commitments in order to give peace a chance.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms its support to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for his actions aimed at restoring peace and stability in Colombia. In that same vein, we reiterate our call on the international community and, above all, to the Council to provide further support to the efforts of the Colombian parties in that legitimate pursuit.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): First, let me extend our thanks to Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García for his presence with us in the Council today. I would also like to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his informative briefing.

The signature more than two years ago of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), followed by its implementation process, remains an undeniable success story and a great example for others to follow. The implementation of such a complex agreement is a demanding task that may sometimes result in disaffection and mistrust among the parties involved.

Having said that, we are of the view that the recent situation, where a small group of former FARC-EP combatants have contested the agreement to the point where they have decided to take up arms and continue their fight outside of the provisions of the law, is unacceptable and demands universal condemnation. At the same time, we recall with appreciation messages coming from the different sides of the Colombian

political scene that focus on the unity of all Colombians. We want to praise the efforts of the Government and a clear majority of former FARC-EP guerrilla members who overwhelmingly support the ongoing peace process. Thanks to the peace agreement, both parties can turn to the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Agreement to overcome implementation challenges and thereby strengthen the coordination mechanisms.

Much has been done in the area of the protection of human rights defenders and social leaders. However, according to the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/780), there is still a significant gap to be diminished. Close protection, especially for former FARC-EP members around and outside of the territorial areas for training and reintegration, must be ensured. Comprehensive security measures must be provided without delay to the departments historically affected by the conflict.

The full political, legal and socioeconomic reintegration of former FARC-EP members is crucial to creating trust and confidence in the peace process. As urban reintegration is steadily gaining relevance, it is essential to ensure that the former combatants will get appropriate access to housing, health systems and education. We are pleased to note that the implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus is gaining traction and soon will bring relief to the areas that suffered the most during the armed conflict period.

Let me now focus on the local elections scheduled to take place on 27 October. Expectations are high in that regard. That is why we are worried about the spike in attacks against candidates, as is noted in latest report of the Secretary-General. We hope that the security forces will step up and deliver the best possible protection. On a positive note, it has to be underlined that the signing by all major political parties of the National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign was a much-needed step to reject violence as a way of conducting policy.

In conclusion, let me underline Poland's support for the United Nations Verification Mission and the United Nations country team. I would also like to reiterate our strong support for the Government and the people of Colombia in their dedicated efforts to ensure sustainable peace in the spirit of national unity.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): First of all, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his detailed briefing and the work carried out by him and his team to ensure lasting peace in Colombia.

Let me also welcome to the Security Council once again Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo García. His presence today once again raises the profile of this briefing. I would like to make three brief points today.

First, Indonesia commends the measures and efforts taken by the Government of President Duque Márquez and its commitment to continuing to implement the Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace. We also once again welcome the many positive developments achieved by the people of Colombia in fulfilling the peace agreement, as well as the positive role played by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. Nonetheless, in line with the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/780), we also call on all the relevant parties to continue to make efforts to enhance mutual trust and deliver on their commitments made to victims, conflict-affected communities and former combatants.

Secondly, we are deeply concerned at the announcement by a group of former commanders of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) of their decision to rearm. We are worried about the potential negative impact the announcement might have in terms of violence and the security situation in some regions of Colombia. Such an act clearly shows that those individuals are not interested in peace, in contravention of the wishes of the people who strive and hunger for peace.

We should focus more on amplifying the success stories of the vast majority of former combatants, who remain committed and engaged in reintegration programmes as an integral part of their contribution to the overall peace process. We are glad to hear from Special Representative Ruiz Massieu that former combatants are involved in various projects. We appreciate the efforts of the Government through the National Reintegration Council to approve more new collective productive projects, benefitting more former combatants, including women. It is up to us all in the international community to support Colombia's economic and social reintegration efforts, especially gender-sensitive projects.

Lastly, we must not lose the existing positive momentum. As we encourage the parties to redouble their efforts to implement the peace agreement, the Security Council, too, should continue to effectively assist the Government with its peacemaking efforts. Political reintegration and successful local elections are also important to ensure stability.

Still fresh in our memory is the strong commitment expressed by all parties during our last visit to Colombia — President Duque Márquez, leaders of FARC-EP, heads of peace-agreement institutions, representatives of civil society organizations and former combatants and communities from Santa Rosa to Cauca. We heard them, and it is therefore our obligation to deliver on our promises to make the peace agreement work. Indonesia stands ready to assist, including by sharing our experiences and best practices in reintegration and illicit drugs crops, as well as in crop-for-peace programming, including palm oil.

In conclusion, we strongly commend the people of Colombia for their courage to achieve peace and stability in their country. Their commitment to the peace process is exemplary. May Colombia's example of nationally led peace continue to be a success story for the Council.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank the speakers and welcome the presence with us of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo.

The Security Council has regularly stressed that the Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace represents an unprecedented and courageous path towards building peace and national reconciliation in Colombia. The Council has been united in supporting this collective effort, including by establishing the United Nations Verification Mission, led by Carlos Ruiz Massieu, whose work I commend. Given the challenges facing peacebuilding, we must, more than ever, continue to support the rigorous approach chosen by the Colombian Government, the former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and civil society in building lasting peace. I wish to focus on the following several points.

The reactions to the announcement, which France condemned, on 29 August by former FARC commanders that they would rearm paradoxically showed that the peace agreement is very much alive.

Indeed, the Colombian Government, the FARC party, other political parties and civil society alike strongly rejected that announcement and reaffirmed their commitment to the agreement. Individual choices to return to violence will not undermine the collective process of building peace.

The security situation in former conflict zones remains a priority, given the high number of killings of social leaders, human rights defenders, FARC ex-combatants and political candidates, especially in the context of the local elections on 27 October. France condemns those killings. In that regard, France welcomes the adoption, on 26 August, of the National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign. We encourage the authorities to step up their efforts to provide all the necessary guarantees to men and women engaging in politics or human rights activism.

Faced with these challenges, the solution is to further strengthen the implementation of all components of the agreement. With regard to the economic and social reintegration of former combatants, significant progress has been made and must be continued. The peace agreement also includes ambitious provisions on rural reform, political reform, substitution of illicit crops, as well as crosscutting provisions in favour of women and ethnic minorities. Their comprehensive implementation is key for building peace in the long term. The monitoring mechanisms provided for in the agreement should also be used. The institutions of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition must be able to carry out their work, which is essential to prospects for lasting peace, in an atmosphere of calm.

In conclusion, we are fully aware of the challenge the migration crisis poses to Colombia. In that regard, I wish to commend the generosity of the Colombian Government and people in welcoming the migrants, with the support of the international community. Given these various challenges, I would like to assure the Government and the people of Colombia of France's support and readiness, together with our partners in the European Union, to continue supporting them on the exacting road the peace.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, our delegation would like to thank you, Sir, and your delegation for convening this meeting during the October, a crucial time in

Colombia's electoral calendar. We also wish to welcome the presence of Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, with us today at this meeting, and to wish him a pleasant stay in New York.

We join other Council members in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and his team for the very clear, detailed and informative presentation.

The report before us today (S/2019/780) continues the trend in previous reports that allows us to hold up Colombia as a clear example of how, when a people comes together in action, they can prevent a crisis from escalating and save lives, thereby realizing the mandate of the United Nations enshrined in the Preamble to the Charter of our Organization. That political will on the part of the Colombian parties, after more than 50 years of conflict, has been evident at critical junctures, from the Final Agreement for the Termination of Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace of 2016 to the successful 2018 elections. It is now reaffirmed by the National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign, signed at the end of August by the political parties, which rejects violence and promotes dialogue and political rights in the context of the elections to be held on 27 October.

Given those significant steps, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea joins the call in the Secretary-General's report and all voices to encourage the parties and the people as a whole to follow a constructive direction, set aside the discourse of polarization and stigmatization and work towards extending a hand and reaching an inclusive consensus on the aspects of most interest to society, especially to those who have suffered the most from the conflict.

On another note, we strongly condemn all known and unknown attempts to reverse the achievements already made in the long process of reconstruction. Given the suffering of the people of Colombia, there is no reason to justify the decision announced on 29 August by a group of former Fuerza Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) combatants to take up arms again. The international community must continue to express its condemnation to that end and put pressure on those responsible, especially the individuals Luciano Martín, known as Iván Márquez,

and Seuxis Pausías Hernández Solarte, known as Jesús Santrich, to reconsider their decision.

In that regard, we welcome the rejection of the political party Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común of that decision and its reaffirmed commitment to the peace agreement. We also endorse the messages of support from the various sectors of Colombian society for the former leaders and combatants of the FARC-EP who remain committed to the peace process and who made many calls for the revitalization of the implementation of the peace agreement as a whole.

The increase in incidents against political party candidates overall is a matter of concern to my delegation because it could pose a risk to this month's elections. However, we encourage all parties to ensure that those elections be held in a climate of peace and tranquillity, through inclusive dialogue and in compliance with the law. With respect to attacks by insurgent armed groups, appropriate measures to dismantle those criminal networks and bring their perpetrators before justice must be urgently taken.

We call for the draft laws and constitutional reforms submitted to the present legislature to respect the commitments set out in the peace agreement, as those are the cornerstone for achieving the reconstruction of Colombia.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea believes that it is our duty to underscore the importance of all armed groups becoming aware of the overriding interest of the Colombian people, namely, peace and national unity. In that regard, we urge the Ejército de Liberación Nacional to consider the preconditions of the Government to resume the stalled negotiations.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the efforts of President Iván Duque Márquez and his Government in the implementation of their "Peace with legality" strategy, while encouraging all those concerned to redouble their efforts to implement all parts of the peace agreement in order to meet the commitments made to former combatants, victims and communities affected by the conflict.

We once again commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia for the noble and commendable work they are undertaking by playing a crucial role in supporting the Government

in its efforts to achieve a lasting and stable peace. They have our full support.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate our appreciation to the Colombian Government for the activities that it is carrying out, the commitments that it is upholding and the strides that it is making on a daily basis in pursuit of restoring social and political peace to the Colombian people, something for which they sorely yearn.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting. I also welcome the Foreign Minister of Colombia, who is present with us today to participate in the meeting. And I thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, for his invaluable briefing on the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/780), which deals with the notable achievements and the challenges facing the implementation of the Final Agreement for the Termination of Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace.

Since the signing of the historic Colombian peace agreement, which ended 50 years of conflict, Colombia has been able to achieve a great deal of national successes and gains, notwithstanding the challenges facing the implementation of the agreement. That requires intensified efforts by all stakeholders to safeguard the successes and make further ones.

Concerning socioeconomic reintegration, we appreciate the efforts undertaken by the Colombian Government through the continued implementation of programmes related to the Colombian peace agreement in terms of the socioeconomic and political reintegration of former members of the Fuerza Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). The Government's communiqué of 14 August concerning a transition period of two years for training and reintegration in certain locations following the expiration of their legal status is a positive step in implementing the peace agreement. We urge all stakeholders to contribute to expediting the reintegration process by providing the necessary legal and security guarantees for former FARC members. We fully recognize the magnitude of the many challenges that all stakeholders will face.

In that regard, we welcome the support extended by all stakeholders for the National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the Electoral Campaign, which rejects violence and promotes both

dialogue and political rights during the election to be held on 27 October. We hope that the elections will be a success and a contribution to the Colombian peace agreement.

Turning to the security situation, the continuing murders, violence and threats targeting former members of the FARC-EP as well as community leaders and human right defenders is a source of great concern. We need greater efforts to address the situation, while also promoting security guarantees and precautionary measures. To that end, we note the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Verification Mission by communicating with the Ministry of the Interior and civil society to establish a national comprehensive policy to protect those groups.

We reject the statement made by former FARC-EP leaders announcing that they would take up arms again. That could undermine the implementation of the peace agreement.

Lastly, pertaining to the efforts of the United Nations Verification Mission, we pay tribute to the Mission's ongoing efforts to strengthen the peace process under the auspices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, while cooperating with local and national authorities and many agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund, as well as the private sector. We also pay tribute to the role played by the Mission in encouraging youth and youth organizations to participate in building peace through volunteer work, athletics, cultural activities and dialogue.

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

Let me start by thanking and welcoming His Excellency Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, to this meeting, together with his high-level entourage. We appreciate his commitment and availability to brief the Council each time the agenda item of Colombia is discussed. He has South Africa's full support in his country's quest to achieve long-term and sustainable peace. In the same spirit, we also thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, for his informative briefing and his perseverance in dealing with the peace process in Colombia.

South Africa fully supports the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) in 2016. We welcome the mechanisms of the Final Agreement, such as the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, which can be used to address the gaps and challenges related to the implementation of the Agreement. We encourage both parties to use the peace agreement as a basis for strengthening dialogue.

South Africa welcomes the recent positive steps taken by the Government of Colombia, which lay the foundation for the Government to continue its initiative to integrate the former FARC-Ejército del Pueblo (EP) combatants and to ensure that they can live full and decent lives in their communities. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of President Duque Márquez and his Administration to implement the "Peace with legality" strategy, which has made way for the approval of various projects for former combatants, the beginning of the implementation of the development programmes with a territorial focus and his visits to former territorial areas for training and reintegration, which can be seen as confidence and trust-building efforts between the Government and former combatants.

We welcome the Government's efforts with regard to the transformation of those territorial areas for the purposes of training and reintegration, as well as the constructive role and responsive attitude of the FARC. Those positive efforts can help to return the lives of 8,000 former combatants to normalcy so that they can contribute to a prosperous Colombia. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment in his latest report that that is "an example for overcoming hurdles in implementation through dialogue" (*S/2019/780, para. 101*), which South Africa supports, as it contributes to addressing the concerns and uncertainties of the FARC combatants regarding their future in Colombian daily life politically, socially and economically.

That is important, as it relates to rural and political reintegration and reform, the development of territories, transitional justice and the rights of victims, who should remain at the centre of the full implementation of the peace agreement. We welcome the role of the Truth Commission and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in that regard. South Africa's own experience with its Truth and Reconciliation Commission affirms

that it is crucial to achieving national unity. Hearing the different views and the various versions of events of all communities in Colombia will ensure that the road to peace is based on an inclusive political process.

The consolidation of peace after decades of conflict and mistrust is not an easy task. In that regard, we are concerned about the announcement made in August by a group of former FARC-EP commanders regarding their decision to take up arms. Such narratives have the potential to reignite violence in territories and undermine the political progress that has been made and the foundations for trust that are being established, as well as the prospects for long-term peace for all who live in Colombia.

We agree with, and wish to join, the United Nations Verification Mission in commending the resilience of Colombian society and its institutions and encourage them to remain committed to the peace process that has saved many lives to date. We also wish to commend the Government of Colombia and the FARC party for swiftly responding to that potentially damaging announcement and rejecting it by expressing their commitment to the peace process on behalf of former combatants across the country. Former combatants who laid down their weapons in good faith must remain part of the reintegration process, which must be respected, honoured and realized, because their efforts remain important to the work of the comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition. We call on all political parties to fully respect and remain committed to the agreement and to continue to desist from any actions that may undermine its comprehensive implementation.

We remain concerned about the security of all stakeholders. That includes the recent killings of various political candidates, community and social leaders, human rights defenders, former FARC-EP combatants, persons participating in the implementation of the peace process, rural communities, including people living with disabilities, indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian communities, particularly in the context of the upcoming elections expected to take place later this month.

It is also important to be cognisant of the specific threats to female candidates and leaders and to urge the Government and all stakeholders across Colombian society to double their efforts to promote peace and tolerance so as to ensure the safety of all in the context

of the elections and beyond. It is important that the Government and all stakeholders in Colombian society encourage the participation of young people and women at the grass-roots and all other levels, whose voices and perspectives can significantly contribute to the long-term plans for the integration and stability of Colombia.

We note the joint communiqué issued on 9 September by Cuba and Norway, guarantor countries of talks between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo, and we commend them for their willingness to continue supporting and accompanying efforts to achieve a stable and lasting peace in Colombia.

Let me conclude by stating that South Africa urges Member States and the international community to support and encourage the people of Colombia to persevere and fully implement the Final Agreement in a comprehensive manner in order to address the concerns and rights of victims, access to justice, reparation, guarantees of non-repetition, inclusive dialogue and a peaceful settlement. Colombia has come a long way. The road to peace is near.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

Mr. Trujillo García (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I commend and congratulate you, Mr. President, on the presidency of the Security Council. I am grateful for the convening of today's meeting to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2019/780). I would like to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission, for his briefing and his ongoing work in Colombia.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the members of the Security Council for their commitment to Colombia and the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. The proof of that is the adoption of resolution 2487 (2019), thanks to which the Council unanimously decided to extend for another year the mandate of the Verification Mission in Colombia at the request of President Ivan Duque Márquez, who is carrying out the "Peace with legality" policy for which the majority of the Colombian people voted in order to

implement the Final Agreement along with forward-looking reforms so as to achieve that implementation by consensus and through institutional mechanisms.

I would like to start with the Secretary-General's recognition in his report of the Government's commitment to the implementation of the "Peace with legality" policy and the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. The report presents a balanced view of the important progress made and the multiple challenges we face in the implementation process. The Government is fulfilling its commitments — and this is not just something for us to claim on the international stage but it has been clearly demonstrated by the results and progress contained in the report. The transformation that Colombia requires in order to achieve "Peace with legality" is a long-term project.

With regard to reintegration, the report highlights a positive evolution, recognizing the achievements of the Government of President Iván Duque Márquez over the first 14 months of his Administration. Work has been conducted in a coordinated manner to transform the territorial areas, whose legal status ended on 15 August. Achieving their transformation and reintegration within the territorial framework is an ambitious process. It is important to keep in mind that, while the report draws attention to the need for rapid progress, that process was not specifically determined in the Final Agreement; nonetheless, although it presents a series of complexities, the Government is deeply committed to moving forward in that regard.

It is also worth highlighting the economic implications of the former territorial areas. Over the past year, \$7.92 million has been invested in the administration and supply of those areas. In addition, the national development plan authorizes the extension of the monthly subsidy for ex-combatants, subject to their compliance with the reintegration process.

I mention those measures because they go beyond what was agreed and demonstrate that the "Peace with legality" policy recognizes that the only way to achieve stabilization in the areas afflicted by violence is by generating real opportunities that allow for the sustainable economic and social reintegration of ex-combatants. Therefore, the implementation of the Final Agreement is one of the cross-cutting components of our national development plan, as well as one of the objectives of the "Peace with legality" policy.

Efforts in terms of reintegration are evidenced by constant progress in the approval of both collective and individual productive projects aimed at achieving effective socioeconomic reintegration. Compared to the levels previously reported by the Secretary-General (see S/2019/530), the number of approved collective productive projects has increased from 24 to 35, thereby increasing the number of beneficiaries from 1,566 to 2,204. In the same way, the number of individual projects rose from 216 to 559, benefiting nearly 700 people.

I would like to mention two specific issues that exemplify the complexities we face, which can be understood only by going beyond what is set out in the report. On the one hand, there is the issue of access to land by ex-combatants. The report mentions that greater efforts are required in that area. It is important to clarify that, although that point was not determined in the Final Agreement, the Government has identified a series of alternative options for access to land that, within the framework of reintegration, will enable the advancement of productive projects in the territorial and agricultural spheres.

On the other hand, the report states that better results are needed in terms of the provision of quality health-care services, especially for ex-combatants living outside the former territorial areas, and also affirms that little progress has been made in terms of psychosocial support, sexual and reproductive health and maternal health. That analysis requires greater depth given that 98 per cent of ex-combatants are already registered to date in the Colombian health care system and that significant progress has been made in providing health coverage in rural areas.

The Government believes it important that the Council should not lose sight of the fact that the implementation process will not be achieved overnight but will require at least 15 years — as acknowledged in the Final Agreement itself. Bringing the rule of law, physical and legal security and the services of each public institution to all regions of the country is a commitment that goes beyond the implementation of the agreement.

With regard to the second pillar of verification, namely the mandate of the Mission in Colombia, and security measures for ex-combatants and communities, I must begin by recognizing the scale of the challenge

to guarantee the protection of the lives of some of the ex-combatants and social leaders.

On various occasions, both here before the Council and on the Council's visit to Colombia, the Government has highlighted the measures taken to reduce any type of threat, homicide or other crime. The report mentions the significant progress made by the Special Investigation Unit of the Attorney General's Office, the strengthening of security and prosecution measures, the decisions taken to reduce electoral violence, the meetings of the National Commission on Security Guarantees convened by President Duque and the adoption of the Action Plan for the Protection of Social and Community Leaders, Human Rights Defenders and Journalists.

That is one of the main sources of concern for the Government — we cannot and will not deny it. My country rejects the murders of former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) combatants, social leaders and human rights defenders. In that regard, the President of the Republic has himself ordered the adoption of more than 20 measures to strengthen security for ex-combatants and 15 specific measures to ensure the security of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) political party candidates.

The relevant authorities are working diligently to investigate and prosecute those responsible for those crimes to ensure that they do not go unpunished. The Government has identified that, among the risk factors affecting the population in general, and social leaders in particular, is intensified competition for dominance and control of illicit economic activities, such as drug trafficking and illegal mining. Many efforts are being undertaken to tackle that security issue, and the Government stands ready to do more.

Just over a month ago, Colombia and the international community received the unfortunate news that a narco-terrorist group had been established by individuals known as Iván Márquez and Jesús Santrich, as well as other former FARC-EP leaders, who are a clear minority. I am grateful for the remarks of Council members on the matter. I would like to highlight the FARC political party's early condemnation of those events — indeed, just yesterday they decided to expel those individuals from the party. I would also like to reiterate the subsequent rejection of those individuals by Colombian society.

The actions of those former FARC-EP leaders constitute the most flagrant violation of the commitments of the Final Agreement. However, that incident made it possible to demonstrate that 90 per cent of the ex-combatants are complying with their obligations; moreover, 76 per cent of them claim to feel optimistic and motivated regarding their future as law-abiding members of society. The Government will remain committed to that vast majority, as we consider that to be a sign of confidence in their reintegration and therefore in the reconciliation that the Colombian people long for.

For those who do not comply, we will be bringing down the full weight of the law upon them. That is why the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, through its Chamber for Acknowledgment of Truth and Responsibility, expelled those individuals several days ago, stripping them of the benefits of transitional justice.

We cannot overlook the fact that the agreement includes a series of commitments made by both parties and that the Verification Mission should also follow up on FARC non-compliance. It is urgent that the party provide information on the location of the minefields and missing persons, hand over the entirety of its assets for victim reparations and allow the effective reintegration of recruited children and adolescents, among other things. Building peace with legality is a collective effort that involves rights and obligations, without exception.

I wish to conclude by highlighting two fundamental issues on which the Government is making progress: the Government's joint work plan with the components of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition and the proposal to increase its budget by 15 per cent, and the implementation of the development plans with a territorial focus. We have formalized the 16 plans. We allocated over \$130 million of tax resources to the regions. We have formalized 300,000 hectares and included more than 450,000 hectares in the National Land Agency. In line with the philosophy of building peace with legality, we will do all we can for regions affected by violence and people who walk the path of legality. Those two issues are critical to ensuring comprehensive reparations for the victims and the stabilization of the areas most affected by violence, as tools to achieve an effective peace with legality.

The Government of Colombia will continue to work as diligently as possible in

“building a culture of legality in which we recognize our differences and choose coexistence, and the rule of law is forged as the indissoluble marriage of security and justice” (A/74/PV.5),

as President Iván Duque Márquez said during the most recent general debate in the General Assembly.

Colombia will not stop at building peace. That process is irreversible and requires the commitment and

support of all gathered here as witnesses of the valuable path we have embarked upon, as well as support for President Iván Duque’s ongoing call to build agreements and consensus to advance in the implementation of the policy of peace with legality.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.