

**A MESSAGE FOR THOSE AT THE DIALOGUE TABLE
FOR TERMINATION OF THE CONFLICT AND CONSTRUCTION
OF STABLE AND LASTING PEACE IN COLOMBIA**

Bogotá D.C., August 30th 2013.

Greetings on behalf of the organizations, institutions and collective groups who make up Peace Week 2013. We promote expression from all sectors of society in favor of peace and a rapid negotiated solution to the armed conflict, with the wish that the dialogues lead to the end of the armed internal conflict and allow us to continue with strength and decidedness, constructing lasting and stable peace.

We are builders, and builders of peace that endorse the commitment towards making our territory a stage for respect, solidarity, justice, peace and understanding with our daily actions. We are Colombians – Colombian citizens who weave peace with our own hands, and from the strength of our fragility and commitment, we ask that the Government – FARC-EP negotiations table - and from the table soon to be set up between the Government and the ELN - as an unmistakable gesture of willingness towards peace and reconciliation lend us their attention to three points of utmost importance to the current process: the victimization within the conflict, citizen participation for overcoming the conflict and national reconciliation.

VICTIMIZATION:

- Recognize the victims of the armed conflict and their right to truth, justice and recuperation, accepting the infractions of the International Humanitarian Law and the serious violations of human rights committed by the offending parties.
- Provide evidence and carry out investigation into the whereabouts of the victims of forced disappearance attributed to political or military action. Over 25,000 people have disappeared over the last 60 years.
- Suspend the planting of anti-personnel land mines and other instruments. Hand in the maps that indicate the locations in which minefields are found and agree to humanitarian de-mining. *The conflict has claimed 10,000 victims of these prohibited weapons.*
- Prohibit the recruitment of minors and immediately release all children that make up part of the combatant ranks. Take integral measures to safeguard the lives and freedom of children. It is calculated that there are over 6,000 children serving in the guerilla ranks.
- Cease immediately the practice of kidnapping and free all persons held against their will. Adopt the necessary measures to contribute to overcoming this crime. *27,023 kidnappings have occurred during the armed conflict since 1970.*
- Stop all acts of victimization against women and establish means that block the use of women as spoils or weapons in war. *Between 1985 and 2012, 2,420,887 women have been victims of forced displacement, 1,431 of sexual violence, 2,601 of forced disappearance, 12,624 of homicide, 592 of anti-personnel landmines, 1,697 of illegal recruitment and 5,873 of kidnapping, all related to the armed conflict.*
- Stop and impede attacks against syndicalists and take all measurements to promote and strengthen syndical and social organization. *In the last 26 years, there have been 12,748 acts against the lives, liberty and integrity of syndicalists, among them 2,932 murders and 226 disappearances. Close to 500 organizations have been disbanded.*

PARTICIPATION:

Participation is not something awarded by the parties; it is a right of the citizen. “The construction of peace is a matter for the whole of society that requires the participation of all”, as states the preface to the General Agreement. This participation should increase over the duration of each stage of the process. With respect to the matter:

- We implore those at the negotiation table to advance the strengthening of those mechanisms already in place along with the generation of new and better platforms for organized participation of society that allow for proposals to be fed to points established on the agenda, especially from regions and territories.
- We ask that the parties respect the agreed agenda and stop their delegates or any representative member of either party from using provocative, insinuating, or accusatory language that may hinder the progress of negotiations or may stigmatize or inhibit participation from rural and urban communities and their members in the process.
- The Colombian people have the right to participate in the validation of the final agreement reached, for which we consider appropriate the use of citizen participation methods expressed in the National Political Constitution. We - as national, regional and local promoters of peace - await the agreement, in order to promote and give the required education necessary for widespread public participation.
- For decades during the conflict the Colombian people have constructed a vast amount of territorial initiatives for peace in the search of a dignified life, social justice, effective participation, the exercising of rights, economic and social development, peaceful coexistence, environmental sustainability and the establishment of a truly democratic institution. This innovative and mobilizing social fabric should be remembered along each step of the transition from conflict to stable and lasting peace.

RECONCILIATION:

- Lasting and stable peace is a process of collective construction, which requires that from the transition we begin working and talking about reconciliation. The construction of peace requires overcoming of social and political exclusion, but also the construction of a new social language that dispenses with aggression and exclusion.
- Peace requires the reuniting of communities, families and organizations. We need to overcome the downward spiral of violence, encouraging the use of words, the reconstruction of social fabric and the political transformation towards inclusion and responsibility towards all communities traditionally excluded or victimized.
- Reconciliation is built day by day in neighborhoods, towns, and regions, promoting a culture of defense and promoting human rights and peaceful transformation of all conflicts. Peace becomes evident and tangible locally, and it is there we must have reunions for reconciliation. The rebuilding of memories plays an important role in national and local reconciliation in order to forgive without forgetting, to advance without hiding from what has happened, to rebuild dreams without the black mark of vengeance.

We confirm, citing Article I of the General Agreement, our plea that no party leave the negotiations table until reaching an agreement that brings an end to the armed conflict and we reclaim in the power to “guarantee the effectiveness of the process and conclude working on the points on the agenda swiftly and in as little time as possible” (Article III of the General Agreement)

Finally, we are willing to play our part as a popular and educative team for the momentum and promotion of the mechanism to be agreed upon by all parties on the road to finally signing an agreement which is wholly backed by society.

Signed:

Redepaz, Pastoral Social National Secretariat (Episcopal Colombian Conference), CINEP-Program for Peace, Pontifical Javeriana University, Redunipaz, Common Social Route to Peace, General Workers' Confederation (CGT), Central Workers Unit (CUT), Confederation of Colombian Workers (CTC), Ecumenical Group for Peace, Pastoral Social Lasallian, Redprodepaz, High Council for Victims' Rights, Peace and Reconciliation (Bogotá Mayor's Office), and the Gota a Gota Foundation.

NB: The figures presented were taken from a report borrowed from the National Center for Historical Memories: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, COLOMBIA: MEMORIES OF WAR AND DIGNITY. The figures originate from studies by ENS (National Schools Syndicate), CINEP (Center for Popular Research and Education) and CODHES (Advisory Board for Human Rights and Displacement), 2013.