

STATEMENT

by

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to the United Nations

on behalf of

Niger, Tunisia, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1)

Meeting on the Situation in Colombia (UN Verification Mission)

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you , Mr President,

It is a privilege for me to deliver this statement on behalf of Niger, Tunisia, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines —the A3+1.

The A3+1 begins by extending sincerest condolences to the families of the victims, who have lost their lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank SRSG Carlos Ruiz Massieu for his detailed presentation and acknowledge the presence of H.E. Claudia Blum De Bar-beri, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia and thank her for consistently making time to participate in Council meetings.

Mr. President,

The peace process in Colombia is at a very crucial stage. While it is concerning that the COVID-19 pandemic alongside a plethora of other challenges have delayed progress on the implementation of the Peace Agreement, we welcome the positive developments as outlined in the latest Secretary General's report (S/2020/943).

In this regard, Colombians must continue to forge ahead with the comprehensive implementation of the 2016 Final Peace Agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace. The position of the A3+1 is informed by its principled stance that the only viable, sustainable solution for conflict remains in the implementation of the Peace Agreement and an inclusive political settlement, which is nationally-led *by*, and in the interests *of*, the people of Colombia.

The Security Council has reaffirmed its steadfast support for the peace process and will continue to accompany Colombia in its efforts to fulfil the veritable goals of

peace, stability and prosperity, as evident with the recent unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 2545 (2020). The A3+1, therefore, encourages all Colombian stakeholders to consolidate the gains achieved thus far and redouble their efforts to overcome lingering impediments.

Mr. President, we also offer the following observations.

First, on the issue of security, we remain deeply disturbed by, and condemn in the strongest terms, the meaningless killings of former combatants, human rights defenders, indigenous women, children and Afro-Colombian leaders. The main drivers of these atrocities need to be identified and addressed and the perpetrators held accountable. The protection of these particularly vulnerable groups will be an important yardstick for the effectiveness of the security measures in general. In this context, we appreciate the decision by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP) to adopt protective measures in accordance with Section 3.4 of the Peace Agreement last July. Additionally, we commend the steady progress made by the **SJP** despite the impediments created by the pandemic.

Further, we urge the government to bolster the State's security machinery in the Departments worst affected by violence, such as Cauca, Antioquia, Norte de Santander and Nariño, and encourage the authorities to convoke regular meetings of the National Commission on Security Guarantees.

Mr. President,

Robustly dismantling illegal armed groups and crime syndicates is also pivotal to ensuring the safety and protection of the Colombian citizenry, especially the groups

made most vulnerable, including women and children, who continue to be victims of sexual and gender-based violence. To this end, the National Commission on Security Guarantees ought to work assiduously, alongside civil society, towards finalizing the public policy to disrupt and apprehend criminal organizations and their networks.

The A3+1 has noted the progress made on the demobilisation and reintegration process of members of the FARC, which should be commended, but is also concerned about the limits in progress on productive initiatives for former combatants due to the spread of the pandemic. In this regard we echo the call by the UN Secretary-General for strengthening efforts towards longer-term reintegration with benefits of reintegration for all former combatants which will ultimately determine the long-term sustainability of peace in Colombia.

Mr President,

In this context, we urge the authorities to improve the implementation of the Action Plan of the Comprehensive Program for the Safeguards of Women leaders and Human Rights Defenders. Women and children have a fundamental role to play in ushering in peace in Colombia and must always be protected.

In addition, the A3+1 reiterates its call for the cessation of hostilities in strict compliance with Security Council resolution 2532. We remain hopeful that the Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (**ELN**) will fully capitalize on this opportunity of peacebuilding and engage in constructive dialogue to achieve a stable and lasting peace in Colombia in the spirit of cooperation.

Second, on the socio-economic track, we recognize the government's laudable efforts in authorizing peace-related funds from mineral royalties to facilitate the implementation of the Development Programs with a Territorial Focus (PDETs). However, we are aware of reports that these funds are inadequate, and that there is the possibility of cutting the investment budgets of entities - the National Land Agency, the Agency for Territorial Renewal and the Agency for Rural Development - essential for the implementation of the Agreement. In this vein, we encourage all stakeholders to deepen engagement and consolidate their efforts to resolve the financial difficulties to guarantee the full and timely implementation of the Final Agreement.

The A3+1 applauds the continued implementation of the Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS) despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. This program of agricultural reform remains critical to dissuading former FARC combatants from re-entering the illegal economy. This program plays a role in assisting former combatants to create income to sustain their livelihoods and contribute to the formal economy.

Concurrently, we are mindful that some aspects of comprehensive rural reform, which are inextricably linked to the Crop Substitution Programme (PNIS), need to be effectively and efficaciously addressed. Accordingly, the A3+1 encourages all parties to advance in rectifying the situation relating to fair access to lands, as well as the challenges facing former combatants residing outside of the territorial areas for training and reintegration (TATRs). These longstanding issues are integral to the full reintegration of former FARC combatants.

Third, the A3+1 welcomes and commends the progress made in the SJP, especially the decision by some former FARC members in recognizing and accepting responsibility for their transgressions. Acknowledging wrongdoings during this peacebuilding stage, in compliance with the Final Agreement, paves the way for forgiveness, and creates the foundations for justice, reconciliation and the full integration of former FARC members into the Colombian society. The A3+1 emphasises the fundamental importance of the reconciliation process, as many UN Member States have benefitted from the positive aspects of such processes. Furthermore, we also continue to support the full implementation of all aspects of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition aimed particularly at ensuring communities and victims of the conflict are priorities in the peace process.

We also endorse the Secretary General's views that parties should endeavour to overcome their differences by maximizing the use of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification for the Implementation of the Final Peace Agreement (CSIVI) to resolve disputes. To this effect, we encourage the CSIVI and the High-Level Forum of Ethnic Peoples to meet regularly to address the implementation of the Ethnic Chapter of the Peace agreement.

Mr. President,

The signing of the 2016 Final Peace Agreement has shown us that, **when dialogue is constructive and results-oriented, convictions are strong and the objective worthwhile, the impossible becomes possible**. It is time for Colombia to be transformed through this peacebuilding agreement and fulfil its true potential.

A3+1 stands in solidarity with the government and people of Colombia in their pursuit of lasting peace, as well as to the UN Verification Mission and country team to assist with the comprehensive implementation of the Final Peace Agreement as their efforts continue to be invaluable in supporting the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

I thank you.