

Bogotá, 3 September 2012

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT JUAN MANUEL SANTOS

WOMEN AT THE NEGOTIATION TABLE

Mr. JUAN MANUEL SANTOS  
President of the Republic of Colombia  
Bogotá

Dear President Santos:

The women's organizations signed below applaud your decision to begin a process of dialogue with the rebel forces in order to bring to an end the armed conflict. We believe that constructing a peace negotiation process is an vital and necessary step.

After so many years of confrontation where the civil population and particularly indigenous communities, afro-colombians, women and children have been most affected in their daily lives, putting an end to this endemic war is imperative in order for Colombia to begin the process of reconciliation.

In this regard, Mr. President, we believe that as well as negotiating with the guerrillas it is necessary to seek an end to drug trafficking, the criminal gangs and paramilitaries that pose a serious threat to the peace process. We are convinced that the armed rebel groups must return to civilian life to participate and construct citizenship along with the rest of society.

Women's organizations support this process of dialogue and negotiation and we hope that it will result in a path towards peace, that is, no armed groups. As active peacemakers from various perspectives we hope for permanent truth, justice and reparations for violations of women's rights and in particular for sexual violence within this conflict.

Additionally, we recognize the contributions of women towards peace and their experience in different fields. Therefore we expect to see women government representatives at the negotiation table. Likewise, we expect the government to insist that the guerrillas also do this. Resolutions 1325 and 1820 of the Security Council of the United Nations recognize the role of women in conflict prevention and the importance of their participation in peace negotiation tables.

The Working Group of Resolution 1325 in Colombia has been continually monitoring indicators of its implementation, one of which notes the numbers of women in forums and committees of negotiation. In this respect, Mr. President, please consider the following recommendations.

Respectfully,

Red Nacional de Mujeres  
Alianza Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz-IMP.  
Corporación de Investigación y Social y Económica -CIASE  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF Colombia / LIMPAL Colombia)  
AFROLIDER