



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

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By email: colombia.acuerdodepaz@gmail.com

South America Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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Dear Signatories,

Thank you for your letter of 28 October 2016 to Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Rt Hon. Baroness Anelay, relating to the State Visit of President Juan Manuel Santos and the ongoing peace negotiations between the Colombian Government and the FARC. I am replying on the Minister's behalf.

The UK government shares your hope for peace in Colombia, which will bring stability and benefit all its citizens. As you may know, since you wrote, the government advanced its negotiations with the FARC and agreed an amended peace deal, which was signed on 24 November, and endorsed last week by the Colombian Congress. On 1 December, the Foreign Secretary made a statement welcoming the historic vote. The Prime Minister also spoke to the President on 2 December to offer continued UK support to the peace process.

Congressional approval paves the way for implementation of the peace agreement, and importantly Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which will be supervised by a UN Special Monitoring and Verification Mission. The UK has encouraged other partners at the UN in New York to ensure the international community effectively supports Colombia's peace process.

The recent State Visit to the UK by President Juan Manuel Santos was the first by a Colombian Head of State, and reaffirmed the UK Government's support for peace-building in Colombia. On 2 November, the Prime Minister met with President Santos and raised a range of issues including progress in negotiations with the FARC, bilateral cooperation on trade and scientific research and human rights. After the meeting, the Prime Minister and

President issued a joint declaration about future cooperation. I attach a copy of the joint declaration which you may find of interest.

Colombia is designated a Human Rights Priority Country by the UK government. We have raised the importance of PSVI to peace building efforts, and funded some projects in this important element of our human rights work in Colombia. The Colombian government recognises that combating sexual violence is a priority issue. In September 2013 the Colombian government launched its National Public Policy for Gender Equality, covering issues such as increased women's participation in political decisions and better access to services for victims of sexual violence.

The State Visit reaffirmed the UK Government's support for peace-building in Colombia and confirmed several new commitments. Through the Conflict, Security, and Stability Fund, the Government will make an additional contribution of £7.5m to support the Colombian Government's preparations and implementation of post conflict strategies such as the Demining Initiative and Rapid Response Plan. We also announced our intention to increase UK prosperity programming in Colombia, by up to £25million, aimed at unlocking economic opportunities in areas most affected by poverty and conflict. This will directly benefit more than three million people in Colombia's poorest regions. The two governments agreed to establish a working group. This will explore how the British Government's might offer UK Export Finance to support peace-building projects such as reliable renewable electricity. This will benefit over two million Colombians living in off-grid areas, and could be used to provide remote healthcare and safe drinking water.

President Santos' visit to Belfast was an important opportunity to learn from our own experiences of peace-building in Northern Ireland. The President met a range of stakeholders including politicians, civil society stakeholders and community groups. The Northern Ireland Cooperation Office and the Colombian Government have agreed to share expertise on peace-building, including through education and security.

We will continue to work to support the government of Colombia in ongoing efforts to secure a final and lasting peace agreement for the people of Colombia.

Yours sincerely,

Colombia Desk, Southern Americas Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office