

## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

### **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESS CONCERN REGARDING**

#### **NEW PROPOSED LAND LAW**

As civil society organizations around the world that are closely following the process of implementation of the Peace Accord in Colombia, we want to draw attention to measures taken by the government of Colombia that could jeopardize Peace Accord progress with regard to land policy and Comprehensive Rural Reform.

We believe that the Peace Agreement reached between the government of Colombia and the FARC is a significant achievement toward ending political violence and improving living conditions in rural areas, particularly in the regions that were most affected by the armed conflict. It is therefore extremely important to ensure timely and transparent implementation of the Peace Accord. Full compliance with the Agreement is essential in order to build a stable and lasting peace and to prevent the emergence of new armed actors and new acts of violence.

Precisely when we should be seeing progress made in implementing provisions in the Peace Accord chapter on Comprehensive Rural Reform, we have instead been concerned to learn of very different provisions included in a new draft Land Law presented by the national government. A range of Colombian civil society organizations have criticized this draft legislation, as it could further exacerbate the concentration of land, enable legalization of land appropriated through irregular means, allocate public land to large mining and energy projects, and obstruct the use of mechanisms to access land such as the legal cessation of ownership. Such provisions contradict the Peace Accord and would further deepen the existing inequality and exclusion in rural areas, which has been a root cause of the violence.

For these reasons, we believe that any reforms undertaken with regard to land must, at a minimum: be fully coherent with the Peace Accord and, in particular, with the principles articulated in its chapter on Comprehensive Rural Reform; ensure the full rights of victims of the armed conflict and of forced displacement; respect the territorial rights of ethnic communities, including their right to free, prior and informed consent; engage small farmer organizations at the territorial level in a participatory manner; and address the gender inequalities that persist in rural areas and affect women in terms of their access to land and to other productive assets.

We have seen that none of these basic principles are included in the new draft Land Law presented by the government. As the international community has strongly supported the Peace Accord in Colombia, we are concerned by delays in implementation and full compliance with critical aspects of the Agreement and the lack of transparency in managing the resources dedicated to that purpose, as well as by government policies that directly contradict the letter and spirit of the Accord.

We believe it is essential for the government of Colombia to ensure that the current process of prior consultation now underway with regard to the draft Land Law respect the timeline agreed with ethnic organizations to carry out the process, and that the results of the prior consultation be fully taken on board before any legislative action is taken.

We call on the government of Colombia and all actors engaged in building stable and lasting peace to ensure timely implementation and full compliance with the Peace Accord, and in particular with all measures included in the chapter on Comprehensive Rural Reform.

07 May 2018

Signed:

ABColumbia

Afro-Colombian Solidarity Network (ACSN)

Caritas Suiza

Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (CRLN)

Colombia Grassroots Support, New Jersey

Colombia Human Rights Committee, Washington

Colombia Land Rights Monitor

Christian Aid

Fondo de Acción Urgente-América Latina (FAU-AL)

Federación Luterana Mundial

FOKUS

La Fundación Sueca para los Derechos Humanos

Grupo de Trabajo Suiza Colombia/Arbeitsgruppe Schweiz Kolumbien (ask!)

Instituto Popular de Capacitación - IPC - de Colombia

Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO)

Kolko - derechos humanos por Colombia

LAG Noruega - El Comité Noruego de Solidaridad con América Latina

Latin America Working Group (LAWG)

Movement for Peace in Colombia, New York

El Movimiento por la Paz (MPDL)

OXFAM

Mundubat

Paz con Dignidad

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Rete Italiana di solidarietà Colombia Vive!

Solidaridad Socialista de Bélgica

Terre des Hommes Suisse

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Cc: Guillermo Rivera, Ministry of the Interior, Colombia; Juan Guillermo Zuluaga, Ministry of Agriculture, Colombia; Presidency of the Republic of Colombia.