

At UN, Colombian President says country's successful peace process could serve as model for others

19 September 2017 – In his final address to the United Nations General Assembly as President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos delivered a message of peace and highlighted the results of the agreement reached between his Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), which he described as a model for the rest of the world.

“If we were able to put an end to an armed conflict in Colombia that has left hundreds of thousands dead and millions of victims and displaced persons, there is hope for other ongoing conflicts in the world,” stated Mr. Santos Calderón in his address to delegations attending the Assembly’s annual general debate.

Colombia had succeeded thanks to political will and an awareness that peace is a necessary condition for both progress and happiness. Paying tribute to the United Nations, he said a special mission had been established by the Security Council to verify and monitor the disarmament of FARC, as well as the ceasefire between the guerrillas and the Government. More than 900,000 weapons had been destroyed and members of the former guerrilla groups had created a political movement to defend their ideas in a democratic manner.

“This is what a peace process is all about,” he exclaimed, “replacing bullets for votes and ending the use of weapons as a means for political pressure,” said Mr. Santos Calderón, explaining that in the coming days, another mission recently authorized by the Security Council would be established to reintegrate guerrillas into civil life, he said, and ensure security to both the former combatants and communities that had suffered from armed conflict. Turning to wider issues, he said expressed concern at the situation in Venezuela and the gradual dismantling of its democracy. He called upon the Secretary General and the international community to support the Venezuelan people. Turning to terrorism, he said it should be tackled with every means possible – military, political, intelligence and international cooperation – while its roots of fear, exclusion and hate must be replaced with love, compassion and respect for difference.

More broadly, the war on drugs had not yet been won and new strategies were needed, he said, pressing States to include human rights in their policies against drugs. Colombia’s vulnerability to climate change had paved the way for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).