

Colombia: UN chief Guterres welcomes start of peace talks with ELN



The city of Quito, Ecuador, which was declared a World Heritage Site by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in the late 1970s. Photo: © UNESCO/Francesco Bandarin

8 February 2017 – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has welcomed yesterday's launch of formal peace talks between the Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army (ELN) in Ecuador's capital, Quito, his spokesperson said today in a statement.

In the talks with the second-largest opposition group, the Government seeks an agreement similar to the one reached last year with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), to end a five decade-long conflict.

"Resolving this conflict is essential to achieving a comprehensive peace in Colombia, to saving lives and to advancing sustainable development across the whole country," said the statement.

"The Secretary-General takes note of the commitment of the parties to listen to the voices of the communities affected by the conflict," it stated, adding that the UN chief commended Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Norway and Venezuela for their commitment as guarantors, as well as the other accompanying and supporting countries.