

Mr President, dear colleagues,

I thank SRSR Ruiz Massieu for his presentation. I welcome the participation of Minister Blum in this session.

Belgium reiterates its **full support for the peace process** in Colombia and we once again welcome the continued commitment of the parties to the full implementation of the Final Peace Agreement. We welcome the recent unanimous renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission.

Belgium remains deeply concerned by the continued **threats, attacks and killings against human rights defenders, community and social leaders and ex-combatants**. Violence in conflict-affected communities has increased. Violence against women in particular poses a challenge to their active participation in the implementation of the peace agreement. Stronger measures to prevent and combat sexual and gender-based violence are needed. It is also necessary to make full use of the mechanisms for security guarantees, including early warning systems, individual and collective protection and the National Commission on Security Guarantees. The perpetrators of violence must be brought to justice. We also call on all parties to reach an agreement on the location of anti-personnel mines.

Belgium pays specific attention to the **situation of children**. This Council unanimously adopted conclusions on the situation of children in armed conflict in Colombia. We look forward to progress in implementing its recommendations. Two important topics require special attention: child-friendly spaces in former concentration areas and the convening of the Technical Working Group on Children of the National Reintegration Council.

The joint efforts of the Government and the FARC to ensure the **sustainability of reintegration projects** must be continued. Access to land for the productive projects of ex-combatants remains an urgent necessity.

Mister President,

We reaffirm our full support for **transitional justice institutions** in their mission to guarantee truth and restorative justice. We look forward to working with the Colombian authorities to broaden the mandate of the Verification Mission to play a role in verifying compliance with the sentences of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. We hope this can be formalized as soon as possible. We note the increase in the budget for components related to transitional justice and call on the government to allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of all parts of the peace agreement.

I reiterate our hope that the Secretary-General and Security Council call for a **global ceasefire in response to the COVID-19 pandemic** will lead all parties in Colombia to take steps to end the violence, allow humanitarian access and work towards peace. We urge all armed groups to end the violence and to seize this opportunity for peace.

Mister President,

Today is the last time that my country will speak on the situation in Colombia during this mandate in the Security Council. Madame Minister, your country serves as an inspiration all around the world. Regions affected by conflict see it as a model to overcome the past and choose a peaceful future. But peace in Colombia has been hard to obtain and cannot be taken for granted. I want to congratulate you and the Colombian people for the courageous decisions you have taken and to call for these efforts to continue, with the parties to the agreement, towards the comprehensive implementation of the Final Peace Agreement.

You can count on the support of Belgium.

Thank you very much.