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Santos: Let's Build a New Colombia with Peace, Equality and Education

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"I firmly believe that Colombia must set for itself a goal to which we can all commit: in 2025 being a country at complete peace, a country with equality and the most educated in Latin America," said the president in his inauguration speech before some 2,000 invited guests.

To build a new country based on those "three pillars," Santos proposed "that we walk together, that we work together for what we have never imagined as a country."

"The time has come not only to move forward on the immediate goals, but also for us to think and rethink ourselves as a nation. The time has come to rethink the social contract we have inherited and the institutions and policies that have governed us. The time has come to raise the bar, to be more ambitious in our dreams," the president said.

"It's our time and we're going to take advantage of it. We're tired of thinking small, of believing we're condemned to think small, of violence, of backwardness, of the lack of opportunities because it's not that way," he emphasized.

The president said that the 2014-2018 administration that begins on Thursday is not his and does not belong to the parties that supported him, and not even to the almost eight million citizens who voted for him on June 15, when he was reelected, but "it's everyone's, absolutely all Colombians'."

Santos, a conservative, prevailed in a runoff against a rightist who was critical of the

incumbent's peace process with the nation's largest guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

Talks between the Colombian government and the FARC got under way in Havana in November 2012.

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