Colombia Begins “Peace Week” with Aim of Reconciliation

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The initiative is designed to prepare Colombian civil society for “the endorsement of what is agreed to” in the Havana talks, Luis Emil Sanabria, the executive director of Redepaz, one of the celebration’s sponsoring organizations, told Efe.

For Colombians to accept a peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, Sanabria said that “a strong society” is needed that not only endorses the process but participates in it and backs it.

“We want to participate and for society not to remain apart from it,” said Sanabria.

Colombia’s Peace Week began 27 years ago at the instigation of the Catholic Church, with the holding of assorted religious ceremonies and other activities to promote peace and reconciliation in all areas of society.

“This week invites us to reflect and perform acts of reconciliation at all levels – in the home, in school, within the family – because peace is not only built in Havana but in all daily environments,” said the director of the National Social Teaching Secretariat of the Bishops Conference, Hector Fabio Henao.

Peace Week activities will run until Sept. 14 and will include – among other things – workshops, youth meetings and events calling for the release of hostages being held by armed groups.

Particular emphasis will be given to events with an artistic character because, Sanabria said,

“the creative act plays a fundamental role in overcoming conflicts and in the transformation of reconciled societies.”