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Statement by President Raul Castro Ruz in Peace Talks

23/06/2016



Statement by President of the Council of States and Ministers of the Republic Of Cuba, Raúl Castro Ruz in the ceremony at the peace talks between the government of Colombia and FARC-EP on the occasion of the announcement of the cease fire and the bilateral and definitive end of hostilities, laying down of weapons and guarantees of security. Havana, June 23, 2016.

H.E. Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President of the Republic of Colombia;

Commander Timoleón Jiménez, Chief of Staff of the FARC-EP;

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary-General;

Esteemed Borge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway, a guarantor country at the talks table;

Esteemed Michel Bachelet, President of the Republic of Chile, an accompanying country at the talks table;

Esteemed Nicolás Maduro, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, an accompanying country at the talks table;

Esteemed Danilo Medina, President of the Dominican Republic and President pro Tempore of CELAC;

Esteemed Salvador Sánchez, President of the Republic of El Salvador;

Esteemed Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico;

Distinguished participants and guests:

On November 19, 2012, the Table Talks between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army started to work in Havana.

In those days, there were quite a few who predicted a failure, as had previously occurred in Colombia in former peace processes. However, the transcendental agreements that the Peace Talks Table has announced today places us closer than ever before to the end of the armed conflict that has been suffered for more than five by the brother people of Colombia.

The decision of the Parties to sign today the agreements on the cease fire and the end of bilateral hostilities, the laying down of weapons and security guarantees is a decisive step forward. The peace process has reached a point of no return.

Peace will be a victory for the entire Colombia, but also a victory for all of Our America. The short history of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) recorded a major landmark, which was the proclamation of this region as a Zone of Peace. The end of the armed conflict in Colombia will be a new evidence of the rock-solid commitment of our peoples against the use and the threat of use of force and in favor of the peaceful settlement of controversies. In the face of differences, dialogue is of the essence. In the face of challenges concerted actions should prevail.

The achievement of peace in Colombia will also represent a hope for millions of persons in the planet, whose main concern continues to be the human survival in a world shaken by violence and wars.

Peace is not a utopia; it is a legitimate right of every human being and of all peoples. It is a fundamental condition for the enjoyment of all human rights, particularly the supreme right to life.

Esteemed participants and guests:

The commitment of the Cuban people and government with peace in Colombia has been and will be permanent, and we will remain faithful to Martí's legacy: "Homeland is Humanity."

Cuba, in its condition as guarantor and host of these talks, will continue to offer all necessary facilities and contribute to the extent of its possibilities to the end of the conflict, with modesty, discretion and a profound respect for the positions of both Parties.

I would like to conclude by congratulating the government of Colombia and FARC-EP. Both Parties have worked tirelessly in a serious and committed way, to achieve the crucial progress announced today.

There are still important and difficult questions which remain pending at the Peace Talks Table, but we feel optimistic. We are more convinced than ever that Peace will be the future of Colombia.

Thank you, very much.

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