

COLOMBIA - FARC and Government Come to Agreement on Drug Trafficking and Illegal Crops

TeleSur

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May 16th, 2014 - The negotiation teams of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - The People's Army (FARC-EP) and the Colombian government announced that this Friday an agreement was met on the fourth point of the agenda concerning drug trafficking and illegal crops.

In this manner, the parties advanced the discussion in Havana, Cuba on the subjects of lands, political participation and now in drug trafficking and illegal crops.

FARC highlighted that with this new agreement the efforts to reach peace in Colombia would continue. "It's necessary to find a definite solution for illegal drugs, crops, commercialization and production", emphasized Cuban underwriter Rodolfo Benitez who released the statement.

He pointed out that "we have reached agreements that include community participation in the design and execution of programs (...) that will offer a solution to the phenomenon," nonetheless, he pointed out that they considered "the internal conflict of Colombia has a long history that involves several decades and external causes to the illegal farming of drugs."

During his speech, Benitez maintained that this agreement looks to "contribute with the purpose of a long and lasting peace" to what was deemed necessary, at the same time, to "find a definite solution including illegal crops, the distribution and commercialization of illegal drugs" that have had "serious effects on the enjoyment of rights and privileges of Colombian society."

In that order, he explained that it is necessary to create a "new vision" to face this problem that involves seeking new alternatives in the areas affected by illegal farming.

"We aspire for peace. We are conscious that this proposal also depends on agreements, particularly by those have been affected directly or indirectly by this problem." In that sense, the spokesman lobbied that "a coordinated action with international cooperation should be certified."

He explained that in Colombia "a new, full program will go forth" as part of the "institutional transformation of the land to generate conditions of well-being for those affected by illegal crops."

He also mentioned that the "parties agreed that the proposals of the community assemblies will be the center of the plans" to attack this problem and those that breach "the acquired commitments, no matter the effort, the government will proceed in its manual eradication wherever possible."

As soon as this agreement is concrete, the negotiation teams will prepare to discuss the topic of transitional justice and victims of armed conflict. On this point, FARC has insisted that a truth committee be gathered, integrated by international and national experts.

This Friday, FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN) also announced a cease fire during the elections, from May 20th until May 28th.

The delegations of both the insurgent group and the government initiated the process of discussions in

October 2012, in the city of Hurdal, on the outskirts of Oslo, Norway. In this meeting, the representatives of both parties established an agenda of five points to debate: agricultural development, political participation, end of conflict and demobilization, a solution to the problem of illegal drugs and the reparation of victims.

Later, a sixth point concerning the verification and endorsement of the final agreements was added to these topics. As soon as the foundation of the peace talks was established in Norway, the discussions between parties moved to Havana.

The first point that the parties managed to agree on was pertaining to agriculture, the cause of the conflict that led to the creation of FARC in 1964. Later, the agreement solidified on the participation of the group in the political life of the South American country.

The armed conflict in Colombia has left at least six million displaced and 220 thousand dead in approximately fifty years, in which process has also participated: insurgent groups, right wing paramilitary and organizations involved with drug trafficking.

Source (Spanish):

<http://www.telesur.tv/articulos/2014/05/16/farc-y-gobierno-colombiano-logran-acuerdo-sobre-narcotrafico-y-cultivos-ilicitos-2828.html>

Translated by **Riley Pentico**.