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Juan Manuel Santos Calderón  
President of the Republic of Colombia  
Palacio de Nariño  
Bogota, Colombia

18<sup>th</sup> August 2017

Dear President Santos,

The International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) is a global network of 177 NGOs that focus on issues related to illicit drug production, trafficking and use. IDPC promotes objective and open debate on the effectiveness, direction and content of drug policies at the national and international level, and supports evidence-based policies that are effective at reducing drug-related harm. Our global membership has expertise and experience on the wide spectrum of drug policy issues and we offer expert advice to policy makers and officials around the world.

We are writing today to express our strong support for the Peace Accord signed by your government and the FARC, which has raised genuine hopes for reducing the endemic human rights violations, violence and conflict in Colombia. Yet we also write to express our deep concern regarding intensified, and increasingly militarised, forced coca eradication efforts.

Point four of the accord on the 'illicit drug problem' recognises that poverty, social exclusion and violence are the driving forces behind the spread of coca cultivation across the country. Towards that end, agreements are being signed between local communities, individual families and the *Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito*, or PNIS, in which local growers agree to eliminate their coca in exchange for cash subsidies and government investment in technical assistance, infrastructure and other benefits. As organisations with drug policy expertise in numerous countries (and including what we have seen in past experiences in Colombia), we firmly believe that poor farmers who grow coca, poppy or cannabis should not be criminalised and that such cultivation can only be stemmed through sustained government support for equitable rural development.

We would also like to note that the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document calls on governments to address the cultivation of prohibited plants through 'comprehensive strategies aimed at alleviating poverty and strengthening the rule of law...and by promoting sustainable development aimed at enhancing the welfare of the affected and vulnerable population through licit alternatives' (paragraph 7(a)).

For that reason, we are deeply troubled by the reports of forced eradication and violent confrontations between eradicators and the local population, especially in areas where communities have already signed crop substitution agreements. These actions not only perpetuate violence and generate new conflicts, but also undermine the very spirit of the voluntary crop substitution agreements and confidence-building efforts with local communities

that have long been neglected – potentially threatening the effective implementation of the Peace Accord.

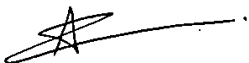
According to [a report](#) published on 15 August 2017 by the *Observatorio de cultivos y cultivadores declarados ilícitos OCCDI Global-INDEPAZ*, in June and July conflicts between eradication forces and rural populations took place in: El Retorno (the area of Inspección La Paz and its surrounding streets), San José del Fragua (Caquetá), Tibú (Norte de Santander), Piamonte (Cauca), Puerto Rico (Meta) and Policarpa (Nariño), among others (also see this recent [civil society statement](#)).

The [Defensoría del Pueblo](#) (Human Right's Ombudsperson's Office) expressed concern about this in a letter from 5 June 2017, pointing out that forced eradication efforts have led to 'the breakdown of institutional trust, disruptions in efforts to promote dialogue and social protests'.

We understand that US government officials are strongly pressuring the Colombian government to meet coca eradication targets. However, the history of coca eradication in Colombia clearly shows that while such short-term reductions can be obtained through violence and force, they are not sustainable if the underlying conditions that lead to such cultivation are not effectively addressed. Building trust with marginalised rural communities, reducing poverty and violence, and constructing a stable and long-lasting peace should take priority. This requires room for manoeuvre with regard to the established targets and deadlines established by the PNIS, and enabling meaningful community participation to influence policy decisions that affect them.

**We therefore respectfully request that you ensure that all Colombian government institutions, including the Ministry of Defense, respect the crop substitution agreements, support genuine dialogue with local communities to overcome difficulties in their implementation, and cease forced eradication in areas where such agreements have been signed or are being negotiated.**

Sincerely yours,



Ann Fordham  
Executive Director



Coletta Youngers  
Latin America Regional Associate

**List of IDPC members:**

1. 12D
2. Accion Andina - Bolivia
3. Acción Semilla Boliviana
4. Acción Técnica Social (ATS)
5. Agencia Piaget para o Desenvolvimento (APDES)
6. AIDES
7. AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA)
8. AIDS Foundation East West
9. Aksion Plus
10. AKZEPT
11. Alcohol and Drug Foundation
12. Alliance for Public Health
13. Al-Maqdese for Society Development (MSD)
14. Alternative Georgia
15. Ana Liffey Drug Project
16. Andean Information Network (AIN)
17. Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice
18. Asia Catalyst

19. Asian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ANPUD)
20. Asociación Costarricense para el Estudio e Intervención en Drogas (ACEID)
21. Asociación de Estudios del Cannabis del Uruguay (AECU)
22. Association de Lutte Contre le Sida (ALCS)
23. Association Margina
24. Association Prevent
25. Association Senegalaise pour la Reduction des Risques Infectieux chez les Groupes Vulnerables (ASRDR)
26. ASUD
27. Asuntos del Sur
28. ATUPRET
29. BABSEACLE
30. Beckley Foundation
31. Brazilian Drug Policy Platform
32. Canadian Drug Policy Coalition
33. Canadian Foundation for Drug Policy (CFDP)
34. Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
35. Caribbean Drug Abuse Research Institute (CDARI)
36. Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad (Dejusticia)
37. Centro de Estudios en Seguridad Ciudadana (CESC)
38. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
39. Centro de Investigación Drogas y Derechos Humanos (CIDDH)
40. Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN)
41. Centro de Respuestas Educativas y Comunitarias A.C (CRECE)
42. Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign
43. Colegio Médico de Chile
44. Collectif Urgence Toxida (CUT)
45. Comision Mexicana de Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos A.C. (CMDPDH)
46. Corporación Humanas Chile
47. Corporación Humanas Colombia
48. Correlation
49. CUIHD
50. Diogenis, Drug Policy Dialogue in South East Europe
51. Drug Policy Advocacy Group
52. Drug Policy Alliance (DPA)
53. Drug Policy Australia
54. Drug Policy Network South East Europe (DPNSEE)
55. Drug Text Foundation
56. Drugs, Security and Democracy Program of the Social Science Research Council (SSRN)
57. Ecuador Cannabico
58. Elementa, Consultoría en Derechos
59. Equis Justicia Para las Mujeres
60. Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN)
61. Fachverband Sucht
62. Federacion Andaluza ENLACE
63. Federation Addiction
64. FEDITO BXL
65. Finnish Association for Humane Drug Policy (HPP)
66. Forum Droghe
67. Foundation Against Illicit Drug and Child Abuse (FADCA)
68. Foyer du Bonheur
69. Fundación Latinoamérica Reforma
70. Gadjuristen (The Street Lawyers)
71. Galiu gyventi - "I Can Live" Coalition
72. Global Exchange
73. Greek Drug and Substitute User Union
74. Groupement Romand d'Etudes des Addictions (GREA)
75. Guyanese Association of Harm Reduction (AGRRR)
76. Harm Reduction Australia
77. Harm Reduction Coalition
78. Health poverty Action
79. Healthy Options Project Skopje
80. Help Not Handcuffs
81. Human Rights Watch (HRW)
82. Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU)
83. Iglesia Evangélica Protestante de El Salvador (IEPES)
84. India HIV/AIDS Alliance
85. Indonesian Association of Addiction Counselors (IAAC)
86. Indonesian Coalition for Drug Policy Reform (ICDPR)
87. Indonesian Harm Reduction Network (JANGKAR)
88. Iniciativa Negra por Uma Nova Política sobre Drogas (INNPD)
89. Initiative for Health Foundation (IHF)
90. Institute for Land Work and Citizenship (ITTC)
91. Institute for Policy Studies (IPS)
92. Intercambios
93. Intercambios Puerto Rico
94. International AIDS Society (IAS)
95. International Association for Hospice and Palliative care (IAHPC)
96. International Center for Ethnobotanical Education, Research & Service (ICEERS)
97. International Centre for Science in Drug Policy (ICSDP)
98. International Doctors for Healthy Drug Policies (IDHDP)

99. International Harm Reduction Development Program, Open Society Foundations
100. International HIV/AIDS Alliance
101. International Network of People Who Use Drugs (INPUD)
102. Kenyan AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO)
103. Lawyers Collective
104. LBH Masyarakat
105. LSE Ideas International Drug Policy Project
106. Mainline
107. Malaysian AIDS Council
108. Medecins du Monde France (MDM-F)
109. Mexico Unido Contra la Delincuencia (MUCD)
110. National Rehabilitation Centre in Abu Dhabi (NRC)
111. New Zealand Drug Foundation
112. New Zealand Needle Exchange Programme (NZNEP)
113. NGO 4 Life
114. NGO Veza
115. NGO Viktorija
116. Nierika AC
117. NoBox Transitions
118. Norwegian Association for Humane Drug Policies
119. Norwegian Association for Safer Drugs Policies
120. Observatorio de cultivos y cultivadores declarados ilícitos (OCDI)
121. Ozone Foundation
122. Pares en Acción-Reacción contra la Exclusión Social (PARCES)
123. Penal Reform International
124. Penington Institute
125. Perle Sociale ONG
126. PILS
127. Pivot Legal Society
128. PKNI
129. Plataforma COLI – Coca Orgánica, Libre e Informada
130. Polish Drug Policy Network
131. PRAKSIS
132. PREKURSOR
133. Prolegal/Proderechos
134. PSI
135. Psicotropicus
136. Puente, Investigacion y Enlace (PIE)
137. RAISSS
138. Re Generation
139. Red Chilena Reducción de Danos
140. Rede Brasileira de Redução de Danos e Direitos Humanos (REDUC)
141. Regional Arab Network against AIDS (RANAA)
142. Release
143. Réseau Français de Reduction des Risques
144. ReverdeSer Colectivo
145. Rights Reporter Foundation
146. Romanian Harm Reduction Network (RHRN)
147. Rumah Cemara
148. Scottish Drugs Forum
149. Skoun, Lebanese Addiction Center
150. South Eastern European Adriatic Addiction Treatment Network (SEEAN)
151. SPYM
152. StoptheDrugWar.org
153. Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP)
154. Supporting Community Development Initiatives (SCDI)
155. TB/HIV Care Association
156. Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group
157. Transform Drug Policy Foundation
158. Transnational Institute (TNI)
159. Trimbos-Instituut
160. Turkish Green Crescent Society
161. Udruga Terra (Association Terra Croatia)
162. Uganda Harm Reduction Network
163. Union contre la Co-infection VIH/Hépatites/Tuberculose (UNICO)
164. Unión de Asociaciones y Entidades de Atención al Drogodependiente (UNAD)
165. Utrip
166. Viva Rio
167. Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
168. West Africa Civil Society Initiative (WACSI)
169. West Africa Drug Policy Network
170. Women's Harm Reduction international Network (WHRIN)
171. World Hepatitis Alliance
172. Worldwide Hospice and Palliative Care Alliance (WHPCA)
173. YCC Juventas
174. Youth Organisations for Drug Action (YODA)
175. Youth RISE
176. Youth RISE Nigeria
177. Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network (ZCLDN)