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FIFTH QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO
THE PERMANENT COUNCIL ON THE MISSION TO SUPPORT
THE PEACE PROCESS IN COLOMBIA
(MAPP/OEA)

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1. Background

This quarterly report of the Secretary General on the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP/OEA) is presented to the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) in keeping with resolution CP/RES. 859 (1397/04), in which the Council resolved “to instruct the Secretary General to provide quarterly reports to the Permanent Council on the work of the MAPP/OEA and its continued ability to contribute, through its work in Colombia, to the fulfillment of the values and principles contained in the Charter of the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Democratic Charter.”

The Secretary General notes for the record that there has been a delay in implementing the Council’s decision owing to the change in the Secretariat and to other circumstances, which will be explained below.

The Secretary General traveled to Colombia on August 29 and 30 to view the peace process at first hand, including the demobilization of paramilitary groups and the efforts of the OAS Mission to Support the Peace Process. The Secretary General met with the President of the Republic, Dr. Álvaro Uribe Vélez; the Vice President of the Republic, Dr. Francisco Santos; the High Commissioner for Peace, Dr. Luis Carlos Restrepo; the Attorney General, Dr. Mario Iguarán; diplomats from the Netherlands and Sweden (two of the most generous contributors to the OAS Mission in Colombia); and representatives of nongovernmental organizations devoted to protecting human rights.

During his visit, the Secretary General was able to ascertain in the field the importance attached to the OAS Mission in Colombia and the relatively broad consensus on the need to maintain and strengthen its presence, even on the part of nongovernmental organizations which call into question some aspects of its work. He was also able to note that an important part of the difficulties still faced by the MAPP stemmed from a shortage of human and material resources, which made it difficult to conduct on-site verification of the demobilization and disarmament process. This notwithstanding, there may also be certain operational aspects that need to be corrected.

In his interviews and contacts with officials, civil society, and the media, the Secretary General expressed his full support for the ongoing demobilization process and the hope that the pacification process could be extended to other illegal armed groups operating in the country.

During the most recent period, the Colombian Congress passed the new Justice and Peace Law, designed to constitute a legal framework for the current demobilization process and any such processes that might occur in the future. The promulgation of this law gave rise to wide-ranging debate in Colombia, especially regarding the mechanisms it provides for establishing the truth about

the crimes against humanity perpetrated by groups that are being disarmed and the possibility of bringing the perpetrators to justice.

However, it is not the role of this Secretariat to comment on the contents of a law passed in sovereign fashion by the Colombian state but simply to consider it as part of the context in which the verification mission is to be carried out. The Secretary General deems it positive that the context is now clearer and is of the view that, under his mandate, verification of how the Justice and Peace Law is applied in the course of demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration is a new challenge to be faced by the peace mission. Nonetheless, hopefully the concerns expressed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in its pronouncements in this regard will be taken into account as a contribution to strengthening the process.

The OAS received a mandate to provide assistance in a peace process of a magnitude unprecedented in the region, one that involved the possible demobilization of more than 40,000 men. To accomplish that mandate, the Organization was given three principal tasks: (i) to verify the cessation of hostilities; (ii) to verify disarmament; and (iii) to work with the communities affected by the violence. Special note must be taken of the bilateral assistance that Colombia is receiving from its neighbors and from other countries. Yet it must be recognized that, essentially because of scarce resources, the Organization is not fulfilling all the commitments it accepted when it approved resolution 859 of the Permanent Council.

That resolution invited the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to provide advice to the MAPP/OEA. It has become apparent during this period that verification of the human rights considerations of demobilization must be shored up significantly. The debate resulting from the Law and the critical stance taken in this connection by Colombian and international NGOs require further attention, especially to prevent these issues from appearing to be at odds with a task as essential as cooperation in the lofty cause of peace in Colombia.

For that reason, the Secretary General, together with the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, is examining the possibility of forming an IACHR Secretariat working group in the field, so that there may be regular, active collaboration with the MAPP to ensure that the Organization's role in Colombia is fully consistent with the obligations of its member states regarding full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

Nor has the OAS been able to offer adequate support to demobilized individuals or their host communities, which are moreover among the communities most affected by the violence. In cooperation with the Colombian Government and the international community, the OAS will have to help pursue its mandate further, with special attention to the tasks of reintegrating the demobilized population and assisting communities in the transition toward a durable peace. The time has come to redefine the Organization's role in Colombia and to offer the help and commitment that the Colombian people clearly deserve.

This report offers a summary evaluation of the peace process between the months of May and August 2005. It describes progress with the Mission's mandate to verify the cessation of hostilities, the need to consolidate that cessation, and the impact of demobilizations on achieving that purpose. The report also reviews the process of reintegrating former combatants into civilian life

during the last three months, and the initiation of projects conducted by the Mission in communities affected by the violence.

2. Introduction

Colombia is currently experiencing one of the most serious and prolonged episodes of domestic violence in the history of the Americas. This conflict has raged for nearly 50 years, characterized by a growing cruelty that has no equal in the history of the Hemisphere. It is estimated that the irregular groups operating in Colombia, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the Self-Defense Units of Colombia (AUC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), possess weapons that in their quality and quantity exceed those available to many of the armies of member states of this Organization. There are said to be more than 40,000 men under arms in Colombia.

The moderating influence that the international community can wield has been seriously undermined by the growing capacity of these groups to support themselves through unlawful activities. Those criminal activities bring in billions of dollars, and the pain and damage they inflict can be appreciated by figures estimating that there are more than 3,000 people kidnapped in Colombia and more than one million displaced people (up to two million, according to some estimates), and hundreds of terrorist acts committed every year. To these figures must be added the millions of young people around the world whose lives are permanently affected by the drugs flowing out of Colombia.

Stability in Latin America, and especially in the Andean region, requires the achievement of solid and lasting peace in Colombia. This is an extremely difficult and complex objective. Yet it must be recognized that the great majority of the members of these groups are young people who can be rehabilitated. The idea of a prolonged conflict can point presage more cruelty and more violations of human rights. The Colombian people have made courageous efforts to achieve peace on numerous occasions. There have been many imaginative and bold attempts by intellectuals, think tanks and governments in search of peace. Colombians of all ideological persuasions have been seizing every lesson learned to try once again, successfully or not, to negotiate peace. Today we are witnesses to a new attempt.

The goal of peace is of enormous magnitude and demands a degree of solidarity of which we have not always been capable in Latin America. There is no point in measuring cruelty, but there can be no doubt that Colombia's pain is as deep and sustained as any country in the region has suffered.

Any peace process demands courage, creativity, and decisions that must be taken primarily by the people who bear the suffering. Only they can understand the real magnitude of the challenge. The international community must offer its backing for any effort on behalf of peace, recognizing that domestic decisions deserve the highest respect when they have been adopted democratically.

The pacification program being implemented by President Uribe has rightly received support from the international community, most recently through the Rio Group. Negotiations with the so-called Self-Defense Units of Colombia (AUC) have led to concrete results, which for the first time in a long time have created real expectations of a cessation of violence. Of course, this is only a first step and is subject to progress and setbacks. But the hope that this negotiation and demobilization

will be followed by the demobilization of other armed groups should not be abandoned. The phase that is drawing to an end is the first one, but the possibility of peace after 50 years of violence hinges on its successful outcome. Nothing should put a damper on the achievement of this main objective.

What is at stake here is not a choice between peace, truth, and impunity, nor is a selection to be made between social peace and justice. Neither truth nor justice is possible in the midst of a war that takes tens of thousands of lives every year. By the same token, it will be necessary sooner or later to ascertain the truth and mete out justice as concerns human rights violations. We are convinced that it is possible after so many years of war to fulfill our deep desire for peace, by acting realistically while clinging to the possibility of offering truth, justice, and redress to the hundreds of thousands of Colombians whose lives have been harshly affected. In many countries that have experienced a similar fate, it has become clear over time that those processes in which peace was possible were characterized by more justice, more truth, and less impunity.

We are convinced that the Colombian Government fully shares these ideas. It is admirable that Colombia has kept its democracy operating despite threats and pressures from the insurgent groups and that it has been able to resist the horrible scourge of corruption attempts by drug mafias. As a result of this high-minded stance, journalists, intellectuals, politicians, human rights defenders, social leaders, and students have given their lives.

3. Summary of developments in the peace process

Following is a summary of some of the major issues in the peace process with the Self-Defense Units of Colombia:

- 15 AUC units were demobilized in 11 departments of the country between November of last year and August of this year, representing a significant step forward in the peace process. To consolidate this achievement will require a greater public law enforcement presence in the places where the demobilizations occurred, in order to prevent incursions by other illegal armed groups.
- Strengthening the administration of justice, working with communities affected by violence, and implementing programs for reintegrating former combatants into productive civilian life constitute unavoidable issues if there is to be a sustainable peace. And this must be done within the limitations imposed by a setting of conflict where other armed groups have not been brought into the peace dialogue.
- With the surrender of weapons by 8,804 AUC members and the start that has been made at clearing territories under the control or influence of those groups, a more significant process is now under way. On one hand, it could lead to the deactivation of most of these illegal armed forces and, on the other hand, to the recovery of these territories and departments by state institutions.
- In those territories where disputes with other illegal armed groups persist, the cessation of hostilities, which is a crucial issue in the peace dialogues with the AUC, is not being fully respected.

- Urabá Antioqueño, Córdoba, Catatumbo in Norte de Santander, Cundinamarca, and the Valle del Cauca, among other areas, constitute territories where the cessation of hostilities, understood as embracing all violent acts against the civilian population perpetrated by AUC groups represented in Santafé de Ralito, has brought with it a sharp drop in crime rates.
- The cessation of hostilities is feasible if these illegal groups can be brought together to disarm and demobilize. Without demobilization, verification of the cessation of hostilities will always be only partial, and very difficult to achieve.
- The cessation of hostilities in the territories mentioned, as a result of mass demobilizations, is an important achievement but it will not last unless a series of actions and programs are launched immediately to reinforce the progress achieved.
- It is possible to move forward on territorial issues for supporting the communities affected by the violence, and on institution building. One example is the reintegration program under way in Medellín, and the steps that are being taken to strengthen the institutional presence in communities that have suffered violence. Another example is the work that the Mission is pursuing, in cooperation with the authorities, in 60 communities in the Department of Córdoba.
- The support being provided for territories, communities, municipal governments, the justice system, and social reintegration in Urabá, Norte de Santander, Valle del Cauca, and Córdoba, among others, confirms this assertion. The process could collapse if it does not receive greater backing to move beyond these initial successes, which in themselves are not sustainable.
- We are nearing demobilization of the two largest AUC groups: the Bloque Central Bolívar and the Bloque Norte. The demobilization of these groups should practically bring the major part of demobilization to an end, which makes demobilization even more critical during this period.
- There is a consensus, even among critics of the process, that the worst scenario for Colombia would be a breakdown of the current dialogue with the AUC, and the unforeseeable consequences that would entail. Despite its difficulties, support for the current effort is beginning to be seen as preferable to backsliding and failure.

4. The demobilization process

Demobilization of the AUC units has been carried out in three clearly defined stages. The year 2003 saw demobilization of a total of 1036 members of the Bloque Cacique Nutibara (BCN) and the Autodefensas Campesinas de Ortega; those demobilizations were in effect a pilot experiment for the peace process. A second stage began exactly a year later with demobilization of the BCN and the Bloque Bananero on November 25, 2004. Subsequently, the Sur de Magdalena, Cundinamarca, Catatumbo, Calima, Córdoba, Suroeste Antioqueño and La Mojana units were demobilized, by February 2 of this year. In the course of the second stage a total of 3793 members of eight AUC groups or units were demobilized.

Between February and June of this year there was a pause in demobilizations because the AUC decided to await approval of the Justice and Peace Act. On May 25 there was an incident when the national government ordered the arrest of Diego Fernando Murillo Bejarano, alias Don Berna, inside or beyond the Santa Fé de Ralito Concentration Zone, for his alleged involvement in the murder of Orlando Benítez, a deputy for the Department of Córdoba, as well as his wife and his driver, on the outskirts of the Concentration Zone.

Murillo Bejarano sat at the dialogue table under the name of Adolfo Paz. This decision and the subsequent operation to capture "Adolfo Paz" led to his voluntary surrender three days later (on September 30, 2005, he was moved to a high-security prison). He also committed himself to the demobilization of all units under his command. As well, the successful outcome of this crisis served to reactivate the demobilization timetables for other groups, thus launching a third and final stage of demobilizations, which is expected to end with demobilization of all the AUC military units, in compliance with the Santa Fe agreement.

As of mid-August 2005, during the third stage, five paramilitary groups had been demobilized with a total of 3,975 members, bringing to 8,804 the total number of persons demobilized, and 5,843 weapons surrendered to date in the peace process with the AUC.

While the number of structures and men demobilized to date is impressive, the MAPP estimates that, to complete the demobilization of all the self-defense groups, there are still 11 units that must be disarmed, as well as three independent self-defense groups that have decided to join the process, bringing to 13,340 the estimated number of members still to be demobilized.

| Demobilizations to date | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1st Stage 2003 | | | 2nd Stage Nov. 2004-Feb. 2005 | | | 3rd Stage June 2005 to date | | |
| <i>Unit</i> | <i>No. members</i> | <i>No. weapons</i> | <i>Unit</i> | <i>No. Members</i> | <i>No. weapons</i> | <i>Unit</i> | <i>No. Members</i> | <i>No. weapons</i> |
| Bloque Cacique Nutibara | 868 | 507 | Bloque Bananero | 452 | 351 | Bloque Héroes de Tolová | 464 | 256 |
| Autodefensas Campesinas de Ortega | 168 | 47 | Autodefensas del Sur del Magdalena & Isla San Fernando | 47 | 38 | Bloque Héroes de los Montes de María | 594 | 364 |
| | | | Bloque Cundinamarca | 148 | 158 | Bloque Libertadores del Sur | 676 | 596 |
| | | | Bloque Catatumbo | 1,435 | 1,115 | Bloque Héroes de Granada | 2,033 | 1.120 |
| | | | Bloque Calima | 554 | 451 | Autodefensas Campesinas de Meta y Vichada | 208 | 232 |
| | | | Bloque Córdoba | 924 | 392 | | | |
| | | | Bloque Soroeste Antioqueño | 124 | 104 | | | |
| | | | Bloque La Mojana | 109 | 103 | | | |
| Subtotal 1 stage: | 1,036 | 554 | Subtotal 2 stage: | 3,793 | 2,712 | Subtotal 3 stage: | 3,975 | 2,568 |
| Subtotal persons demobilized: | | | | | | | 8,804 | |
| Subtotal weapons surrendered: | | | | | | | 5,834 | |

Concentration of the Bloque Central Bolivar (BCB):

An important factor in the current situation is the announced concentration of all military units of the Bloque Central Bolivar (BCB), with the exception of the Bloque Vencedores de Arauca. At the present time, this is the largest self-defense organization still operating in Colombian territory, with an estimated total of 4,400 members. In a public communiqué of July 8, 2005, the BCB announced its intention to concentrate all of its political and military units in defined zones. According to the official communiqué, that decision was taken with a view to facilitating the work of the OAS in monitoring and verifying the cessation of hostilities. It should be noted that since the publication of the communiqué the BCB has already demobilized the first of its units, the 676-member Bloque Libertadores del Sur (BLS), which was operating in the Department of Nariño. Implementation of this concentration move was still the subject of negotiation between the

government and the BCB at the time this report was prepared. Information available to date indicates that the idea is to demobilize the Bloque Putumayo, the Frente Vichada and possibly the Frente Sur de los Andaquíes, which is operating in the Department of Caquetá.

5. Work of the Mission

In pursuing its mandate the MAPP currently enjoys the valuable support of the Governments of The Bahamas, Ireland, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, and the United States. Currently, the Mission has 44 employees and five regional offices: Medellín (four employees), Montería and the Concentration Zone (*Zona de Ubicación*: four employees), Valledupar (two employees), and Cúcuta (two employees). The Mission also has a special mobile team consisting of four officers, one of whom is based in Bogotá and the others in regional offices.

Following is a status report on the work of the Mission during this quarter:

Verification of the cessation of hostilities

As noted in previous reports, while the AUC have made some partial efforts to comply with the cessation of hostilities in some regions of the country, they have generally failed to fulfill this commitment. This constitutes a major stumbling block to the normal unfolding of the process.

Although the Mission verified an improvement in the security situation in departments such as Sucre, Córdoba, Norte de Santander, Cesar, La Guajira and Magdalena, which has resulted in a decline in the most common forms of violence, failure to observe the cessation of hostilities is still the most pressing concern.

The Mission's findings have produced the following list of territories and of armed units of the AUC responsible for violating the cessation of hostilities during the last quarter:

- **Northwestern Sucre and Bolívar**; principally the municipios of San Onofre, Tolú, Tolú Viejo. AUC Unit: Bloque Héroes de los Montes de María.
- **Eastern Antioqueño**; principally the municipios of San Carlos, San Luis and San Rafael. AUC Unit: Bloque Héroes de Granada.
- **Southern and Southeastern foothills of the Sierra Nevada**; the municipios of Pueblo Bello Valledupar, La Paz, San Juan de Cesar, Villanueva and Fonseca. AUC Unit: Bloque Norte, Frente Mártires de Cesar.
- **Southern Cesar**; in the municipios of Aguachica, Pailitas, Pelaya, La Gloria, El Carmen. AUC Unit: Bloque Norte, Frente Autodefensas Campesinas Sur de Cesar.
- **Barrancabermeja Zone**; in the municipios of Barrancabermeja and Puerto Wilches. AUC Unit: Bloque Central Bolívar (BCB)
- **Department of Arauca**; principally in the municipio of Tame. AUC Unit: Bloque Vencedores de Arauca

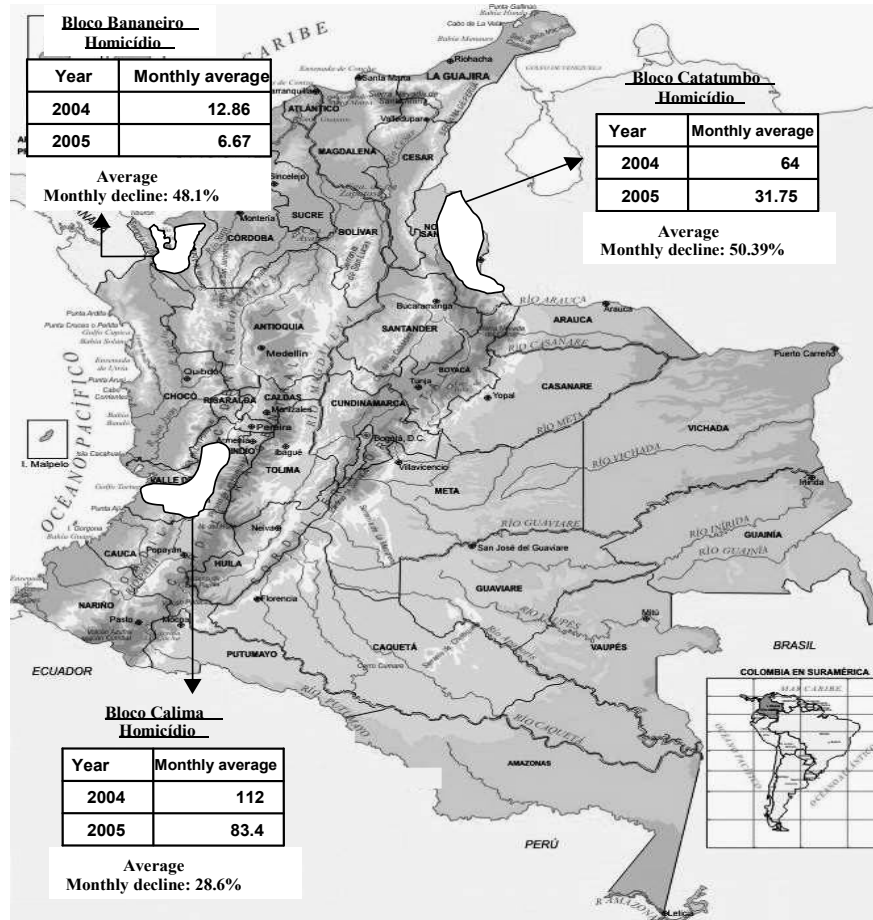
In contrast to what has been happening in the zones mentioned above, where armed units of the AUC remain active, in those areas where the armed groups have been dismantled there has been a substantial decline in incidences of violence. This demonstrates the importance of demobilization for enforcing the cessation of hostilities, and supports the Mission's reiterated assertion that concentration and demobilization of troops is the only way to verify that the cessation of hostilities is being respected.

- According to official figures provided by the public security forces, in the 19 municipios^{1/} in Norte de Santander where the AUC's Bloque Móvil Catatumbo was operating, the average number of murders fell from 64 per month in the last quarter of 2004 to 31.75 per month in the first quarter of 2005. As other indicators of the real dismantling of the military structure of the Bloque Catatumbo we may mention: (i) municipal elections are being held in that region with various candidates representing different political organizations, something that never happened prior to demobilization; (ii) there is a gradual reconciliation between the citizens and the administration of justice. People are now unafraid to come forward in their own name to report criminal activities, something they would not have done previously for fear of reprisal from the AUC.
- With respect to the demobilized Bloque Calima, despite the difficult public safety situation in the Departamento del Valle, the murder rate in the 12 municipios^{2/} where this unit operated fell from 112 a month in the last quarter of 2004 to 83.4 a month in the first quarter of 2005.
- In Urabá, where the first of the mass demobilizations took place, the police and the Crime Observatory (*Observatorio del Delito*) both point to a substantial decline in the overall crime rate, and in the homicide rate in particular. Thus, the homicide rate fell from 12.86 murders per month in the last quarter of 2004 to 6.67 per month in the first quarter of 2005.

The Public Ombudsman's Office, with which the MAPP has signed an understanding, observed in its last report that violations of International Humanitarian Law declined during the first quarter this year in areas of paramilitary influence where there were demobilizations. Nevertheless, that same report indicates that paramilitaries are continuing to violate the cease-fire in those zones, although complaints declined from 130 in the first half of 2004 to 80 in the first half of 2005.

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1. El Tarra, Tibú, Cúcuta, Villa del Rosario, El Zulia, Puerto Santander, Cúcota, Chitagá, Labateca, Toledo, Ragonvalia, Los Patios, Cucutilla, Sardinata, Pamplona, Pamplonita, Arboledas, Gramalote, Mutiscua.
 2. Buenaventura, Buga, Calima (Darien), Dagua, Florida, Pradera, Tulúa, Jamundí, Palmira, Ginebra, San Pedro, Bugalagrande.

DECLINE IN HOMICIDES PER MONTH
Last quarter 2004 – First quarter 2005



Monitoring reintegration

Demobilizations to date have affected some 8,804 former combatants of the AUC. They are currently located for the most part in Norte de Santander, Medellín and Turbo (Antioquia), Córdoba and Valle del Cauca.

The Mission's verification in the demobilized zones and in the Referral Centers (CRO) looks at aspects such as the effective dismantling of the demobilized unit, incursions by other self-defense units or other illegal armed groups, the security situation for demobilized troops, and fulfillment of the social and economic commitments that the government gave to demobilized personnel.

The Mission can report positively on the effective dismantling of the armed units of the self-defense groups in all regions where this has occurred. Similarly, the Mission has noted the efforts of the security forces to regain control of these regions and to prevent the incursion of other armed groups.

With respect to the provision of services and activities for reintegrating former combatants, the evaluation produces mixed results. In some regions things are proceeding in an acceptable manner, while in others a greater effort is needed on the part of the authorities.

Efforts at reintegrating demobilized personnel into civilian life have not yet benefited from international cooperation, and this makes an already complex situation even more difficult, especially in the territories where most of the demobilizations have occurred.

Following is a summary of the situation observed by the Mission in each of the zones where these processes are under way and where the Mission has a presence.

Urabá

The security situation for demobilized personnel to date is satisfactory. There is no information on incursions by other illegal armed groups into the cleared zone, and the public security forces have stepped up their presence.

Reintegration of demobilized troops is progressing within the expected parameters. Their participation in educational activities is high, and job opportunities are opening up with the implementation of various productive projects.

Valle del Cauca

The security situation for demobilized personnel is alarming. To date, 31 demobilized individuals have been killed. The general situation of public security in the area remains complicated, and the possibility that illegal armed groups are attempting to occupy areas that were cleared during the demobilization cannot be discounted.

The violence that prevails in the zone is compounded by the delay in the provision of CRO services and programs. Prompt reporting of problems in providing help to demobilized individuals could prevent them from losing faith in their transition to civilian life and thus undermining the credibility of the process. At the same time, it must be recognized that the inducements of illegal elements could tempt them to return to outlawed activities.

Córdoba

The security situation for demobilized personnel in Córdoba is positive. In the city of Montería there has been no upsurge in the crime rate following demobilization. There is a concern, however, that illegal armed organizations could take advantage of the lack of job opportunities for demobilized individuals.

Medellín

With respect to reintegration of the former Bloque Cacique Nutibara (BCN), a significant percentage of its demobilized members are currently pursuing studies at the primary, secondary or technical level in the SENA or are taking courses in the Instituto Tecnológico de Medellín (ITM). It

is to be hoped that they will keep up these efforts, and this in fact represents a concrete case where the MAPP should be able to cooperate more effectively in the reintegration processes noted here.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for demobilized members of the Bloque del Suroeste Antioqueño. They have not received any solid guidance, nor have all the services of the program been made available to them. The mobile CRO for the zone has yet to be created.

Norte de Santander

With respect to former combatants of the Bloque Catatumbo, the security situation is of concern. To date 22 of them have been killed. The authorities will have to give greater effort and attention to the issue of productive projects.

The commitment to the process on the part of demobilized personnel has improved. It may be said that they are taking part and they are prepared to continue with the social readjustment program. The government's reintegration program has yet to reach the expected level of effectiveness. It is worth repeating, however, that the program does not receive any external cooperation funds.

Work with the communities

The beginning of AUC demobilization opens the prospect for strengthening institutions, especially in the areas of justice and security. With funding from the Government of the Netherlands, the Mission has been working with communities and State institutions to implement a program of community-based alternative justice mechanisms.

The work now under way with 60 communities historically affected by violence in the Department of Córdoba and the free popular election of conciliators (*Conciliadores en Equidad*) from among the natural leaders of these rural communities represent the first experiment of this type to be organized in the areas of paramilitary influence.

The ongoing counseling work that the MAPP is conducting with more than 7,000 inhabitants of the municipios that make up the Concentration Zone has established a basic degree of communication and trust in this task.

As well, as a means of supporting these initiatives, the Mission is incorporating exercises with these communities for achieving reconciliation and subsequent reconstruction of the collective memory. This involves the search for the truth, a fundamental right of victims of the conflict, conceived as a process of social and community construction emerging from the reality of violence. The real victims of the conflict can and must be heard, but they must also participate actively in constructing the truth. The MAPP can and must facilitate this process.

Agreements with institutions

In April the Mission signed several agreements with the city government of Medellín and the Facilitation Commission of Antioquia to expand cooperation mechanisms with those institutions and reinforce the Mission's work in this important part of the country.

As well, an agreement was signed with the Ministry of the Interior and Justice to facilitate execution of programs for strengthening the administration of justice and for supporting reintegration.

6. Conclusions

The OAS has a historic opportunity to contribute to building a solid and lasting peace in a country that has suffered one of the most violent and prolonged conflicts in the Hemisphere. The Organization is in a position to address this challenge, provided it maintains the political commitment established in Resolution 859 and that it has the means and resources necessary to achieve the planned objectives. Consistent with this mandate, Foreign Ministers of the Rio Group recently issued a statement declaring their support for the Colombian government's efforts to reestablish peace and their interest in strengthening support for the Mission so that it can fulfill the mandate given it by the OAS Permanent Council. In this respect, a recent evaluation of the Mission at the request of the governments of the Netherlands and Sweden recommends increased support from those countries to the MAPP, and also calls for greater commitment by member states of this Organization.³ It is now time for member states of the Organization to translate their frequently expressed political will into real support and concrete deeds. The difficulties encountered to date can be overcome if the Mission's work and presence are intensified.

If the Organization is in a position to pursue these tasks, it will have to increase the size of the Mission and strengthen its management so that it can respond to the new goals and directions proposed in this report. The MAPP, which today has only 44 employees, should have a permanent establishment of more than 100. To achieve such an increase would require an annual budget of more than \$10 million. Considering what is at stake in Colombia, and the benefits that could be achieved by effective OAS involvement in the peace process, this amount is clearly reasonable and within the possibilities of the member states of our Organization.

Likewise, the Secretary General considers it essential for the OAS Mission in Colombia to have a human rights component and will continue working with the IACHR, with full respect for its autonomy, to reach the necessary agreements.

A fundamental component of the strategy is to obtain financing as quickly as possible for giving the IACHR a permanent presence so that it can fulfill its specific mandate of advising the MAPP. On this point, the Secretary General welcomes the highly significant step taken by the Netherlands Minister of Justice, with whom he met in Colombia on August 29, in contributing €200,000 to help the IACHR fulfill its mandate. The IACHR's support for the work of the MAPP is critical for guaranteeing that all OAS actions in Colombia are taken in accordance with the obligations of its member states to ensure full respect for human rights and for international humanitarian law. The Secretary General also wishes to thank the President of Chile, Ricardo Lagos, who on his recent visit to Colombia promised assistance from his country to the MAPP, a commitment that was ratified by Ambassador Esteban Tomic, Permanent Representative of Chile to this Organization.

With respect to the mandate, which is quite broad, and calls for verification of the cessation of hostilities, disarmament, and reintegration, the Secretary General proposes to establish priorities,

³ The OAS General Secretariat will publish this document separately as an information document.

in agreement with the Government of Colombia, for assuming the corresponding responsibilities and fully and effectively carrying out the objectives of the Mission, in particular, those intended to significantly reinforce verification of matters associated with respect for human rights and to follow up on application of the Justice and Peace Law in the course of demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration. Also noteworthy is the importance of working with the communities most affected by violence, including indigenous peoples and communities of African descent, by supporting local initiatives in conflict zones and promoting measures to foster trust and reconciliation, to develop a culture of democracy, peace, and peaceful resolution of the violence, as well as to identify, formulate and develop social initiatives and projects in those areas.

On October 4, President Uribe presided over the installation of the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation. Established by the Justice and Peace Law, the Commission is composed of distinguished Colombian personalities, including Eduardo Pizarro, Ana Teresa Bernal, Patricia Buriticá, Jaime Jaramillo Panesso, Gustavo Villegas, and Monseigneur Nel Beltran. Its Commission are deemed to be extremely important and will require national and international support. The OAS Mission will be able to play a major role as an international observer within the Commission and to provide it, through verification and community work, with extremely valuable information.

The Secretary General asks member states' support for strengthening the Mission, support that should be reflected in the provision of financial and material resources. As a first step in this direction, there is a need for more staff to carry out the mandates. Some member countries with experience in demobilization, disarmament and reintegration could contribute their expertise in these matters. This could be done by means of the direct contribution of funds or of personnel from those countries with experience in these issues.

In order to give the necessary certainty and transparency to the tasks of the Mission, it is very important to develop a manual of procedures that will make up-to-date, clear and specific information available to the General Secretariat. It would also be useful to establish mechanisms to ensure proper documentation and transparent evaluation, investigation and guarantees for complaints of cease-fire violations by members of the paramilitary units involved in the process.

Finally, the Secretary General wishes to thank the men and women of the Mission in Colombia who with woefully inadequate resources have managed, through sacrifice and dedication, to give the OAS a presence that is contributing significantly to a peace effort on which depends so heavily the stability of Latin America, and especially of the Andean region.

APPENDIX I

**SPECIAL DECLARACION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS
OF THE RIO GROUP ON COLOMBIA**

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Rio Group, gathered at a special meeting, listened to the detailed report of the Foreign Minister of Colombia, Carolina Barco, on the peace process under way in her country. The delegations present thanked her for that presentation.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs expressed their appreciation and support for the efforts, as noted, being made out in Colombia to restore peace in that country. They welcomed the demobilization and disarmament of over 17,000 members of illegal armed groups and recognized the contribution of the Organization of American States through the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP-OEA), whose progress will be assessed in the near future by the OAS Permanent Council.

Likewise they said that the process of reintegration and of support for the communities in which demobilizations had taken place were important in ensuring a sustainable peace process with strict respect for human rights principles.

In this regard, they expressed an interest in strengthening support for the Mission so that it might fully implement the mandate assigned to it by the OAS Permanent Council.

San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentine Republic, August 26, 2005

APPENDIX II

**JOINT DECLARATION OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE
SOUTH AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF NATIONS**

The Presidents of the South American Nations, meeting at the First Summit of the South American Community of Nations, held in Brasilia on September 30, 2005, expressed their appreciation and support for the efforts in Colombia to establish peace. They welcomed both the collective and the individual demobilization taking place and the disarmament of over 18,600 members of illegal armed groups and recognized the contribution of the Organization of American States (OAS) through the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP-OEA).

Likewise they said that the process of reintegration and of support for the communities in which demobilizations had taken place were important in ensuring a sustainable peace process with strict respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Presidents recognized that, if the process of demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration and that of verification by the OAS Mission were to be successful, assistance from the international community was needed.

In this regard, they expressed an interest in strengthening support for the Mission so that the mandate issued by the OAS Permanent Council could be fully implemented, and invited the Secretary General of the Organization to inform the countries of the South American Community of Nations, within a month's time, of how best this support could be demonstrated.

Brasilia, September 30, 2005