

COLOMBIA



COLOMBIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement by
H.E. Mr. Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of Colombia**

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The celebration of the 60th anniversary is an ideal stage to reiterate my country's commitment to the goals and principles of the United Nations. We express our recognition and support in the task of reforming the Organization.

Colombia's adherence and respect for multilateralism is based on its active participation throughout the United Nations process, from the signing of the Charter in San Francisco on the 26th of June of 1945 until today, with the important presence of many of its bodies in my country, that support the national policies to solve the problems we face.

It is a source of pride to know many Colombians have made their mark on the Organization. It is worth mentioning, among others, former President Alberto Lleras Camargo, one of the first and most fierce and efficient defenders of the principle of legal equality between States. He was also a champion of common defense, which compels democratic States to come to one another's defense should one of them be the victim of aggression.

Colombia had the privilege of presiding, with Eduardo Zuleta Ángel, over the opening of the First General Assembly. His vision of the Organization is as valid today as it was 60 years ago, as you, Mr. President, acknowledged in your speech to the Assembly in past days.

Mr. President,

The diversity and evolution of thought are human gifts. To exercise these faculties, it is necessary for States to guarantee democratic opportunities, which allow each individual to contribute and compete in the quest for the collective good. There can be no room for the End of

Ideologies. To stagnate ideology is to cancel out emulation, to fail to recognize intelligence and to paralyze creativity in the search for solutions to the people's problems.

From the recognition of diversity and the evolution of thought springs our vocation for pluralism. It guides our struggle against terrorism, which we have carried out with democratic conviction for three long years.

Upon looking at dictatorships as expressions of the past and at democracy as an indestructible paradigm, it is timely to review concepts that are becoming obsolete and that must be replaced with more useful and contemporary ones.

The vision that categorizes governments as being on the left or the right is a simplistic view that produces a polarized political atmosphere. It has resulted in irreconcilable emotions and sensibilities that are not consistent with the actions of our governments and that threaten the unity of our countries.

I dare suggest that, in their place, we use five parameters to qualify our democracies. They are: security with a democratic reach; the effective protection of public freedoms; transparency as a factor of confidence; social cohesion as a principle of democratic sustainability; and the independence of institutions.

Under these parameters, we can define if a democracy is institutional or "caudillista"; if it is governed by judicial order or by personal whim; if it is a progressive or retardant democracy; inclusive or exclusive.

Colombia is working on a concept of Democratic Security, included in global security. We call it *democratic* because it differs from the doctrine of National Security, which covered the continent and was used to suppress freedoms, punish democracy, stigmatize the opposition and frustrate dissent.

Our security is aimed at deepening democracy. We have gone to great lengths so this process of reestablishing security feels like a democratic value to all expressions of thought. We are determined that security reach equally, and in the most efficient and transparent manner, those closest to the government, as well as its most hardened opponents.

In Colombia, the security problem has been the product of the weakness of the State in facing criminals. We have wanted to transform the equation and to have, finally, a State with the strength to guarantee Colombians the effectiveness of its freedoms and protect them from all threats.

Facing a democracy that is deep and without ambiguities, no violent action can have overtones of legitimacy; on the contrary, it demands to be disqualified and branded as terrorist. For this reason, we express our solidarity to those who suffer from the actions of terror.

For three consecutive years, the number of homicides, kidnappings and other terrorist crimes has fallen in Colombia. We have not yet won the struggle against terrorism, but we are winning it. That victory will bring peace and progress to our country and, with illicit drugs uprooted from our soil, the world will feel great relief. For this, we need the participation and support of the international community.

The opposition in Colombia has always had guarantees, but today those guarantees are truly effective thanks to Democratic Security. Colombia has always embraced the cause of human rights, but these now count with greater respect in their practice thanks to Democratic Security.

The concept of security we profess and practice, while strengthening the people's trust in institutions, demands that those who have chosen violence cease hostilities and ready themselves to negotiate a definite peace. The decisive and firm action to combat those who practice terror, along with a generous policy for those who decide to give up armed intimidation, has allowed the demobilization and reinsertion into society of 20,000 terrorists, out of the close to 50,000 we face. The Government's door remains open to negotiation.

We need the world to support our reinsertion plans. Imagine the magnitude of the challenge: 20,000 former combatants, a number that could double in coming years. Individuals who have lived by the gun, accustomed to killing, deserve the opportunity to rebuild their families and find legal employment. What better contribution to peace than the definite rejection of illegality? To this end, we must provide new opportunities for rehabilitation and social integration.

We are implementing the "Justice and Peace Law", applicable to all terrorist groups. In comparison with previous Colombian laws and others from processes in many countries, it raises the bar in terms of justice and reparations to victims.

To rid our country of the illicit drugs that finance terrorism, we have increased fumigation and we are very optimistic about manual eradication, which by the end of 2005, should result in the destruction 30,000 hectares of illegal crops. We require greater support from the international community to bring alternative opportunities to our peasants.

Democratic Security has allowed investors to start regaining their confidence, as we begin to see the early signs of unemployment reduction. There we will find the resources to face another challenge: to overcome poverty and build a nation with total social cohesion.

Our social policy is framed by a long-term vision and by immediate goals that are under constant review. These are in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, the fulfillment of which we reiterated yesterday in this hall.

Allow me to mention 3 of the 7 chapters of our social policy: the Educational Revolution, axis of social cohesion, is the road of equity in the distribution of income and the opening of avenues of social mobility, without which democracy can not be fully achieved; Country of Owners, which emphasizes the financing of medium, small and micro businesses, to overcome the barrier of access to credit, an odious form of discrimination that obscures democracy; and, Integral Social Protection, which in 3 years should provide health insurance for all people living in poverty, advance child nutrition to ease access to education and the well-being of the elderly.

Colombia should finish the year with 500,000 Families in Action, poor educator families, who receive a State subsidy to feed and educate their children. In the near future, we will reach 1 million, which adds to the increasing budgetary efforts of the Educational Revolution. In 2006, we will reach 10 million children who benefit from nutrition programs and 570,000 elderly citizens will receive a stipend that will allow them to cover their most pressing needs.

Our social policy also includes a constant effort to strengthen alternative development programs that will allow us to definitively overcome the problem of illicit drugs. Through these programs, the international community has a unique opportunity to contribute and make effective the principle of shared responsibility.

The forest-keeper families program, which includes 33,000 families committed to maintaining their areas free of drugs and to supervising the recovery of the tropical forest, and

the attention given to those displaced and reinserted, are social programs that next year should cost no less than 300 million dollars.

We stand firm in the fight against terrorism and firm in our conviction that a sustained and permanent victory depends upon the success of each individual country in the struggle for social cohesion. In projecting our security policy to become an axiom of the State, we conceive it to be inexorably linked to the constant improvement of the social conditions of our people.

The dilemma between authority and social policy is mistaken. The dilemma between security and redistribution is false. Peace is the offspring of authority, but to be able to reach it definitively we must construct a social fabric with equity.

Let this be an opportunity to bring to the forefront the threat of oil prices and the lack of alternative sources of energy on countries that are not net importers. It is already possible to see signs of unconformity that could lead to grave disruptions of institutional stability. Not facing this problem could generate greater obstacles in the fight against poverty. Many countries, among them many from Central America and the Caribbean, require immediate action to help finance the supply of fuel and the development of new sources.

I reiterate the gratitude of the Colombian people for the solidarity and efficiency of the United Nations on our soil.

We wish for the discussion on reform to give greater confidence to multilateralism. We wish for the Organization to emerge strengthened from that debate, in order to promote the effective existence of institutional democracy, governed by legal, progressive and inclusive order, in each of the countries of the concert of nations.

Contemporary diplomacy, led by the United Nations, must become more austere in its spending, appeal more to the Internet and modern communications and less to travel, in order to become a less burdensome load on countries so that those resources saved on organizations, expenditures and private contractors, truly reach those communities that need them.

Each country and the United Nations, as our universal organization, can contribute to make our hopes a reality and bring peace, security and integral development to our people, meeting the goals we have set for ourselves for the start of the 21st century.

We greet, with our deepest sympathy, the American people affected by hurricane Katrina, and we wish to express our concrete solidarity with its victims.

We have our hearts set on one task: meeting the social goals of the millennium.

Thank you.