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Statements made by State under review at the HRC under item 6 after the adoption of the UPR report

Country: Colombia (First Cycle, 2008)

Date of the statement:

. 11th HRC session - 12 June 2009

“After the adoption of its UPR report, Colombia has embarked on a process of follow up on recommendations and voluntary commitments resulting from the review and recently the presidential programme for human rights published an initial report which can be found on the internet page of the presidential programme for human rights as well as on the UPR Info website. Among the progress made I might mention the invitations extended to four special procedures, the special rapporteur on extra judicial executions who’s visit is currently under way, the special rapporteur on human rights defenders, the special rapporteur on fundamental freedoms of indigenous communities and the special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers. With respect of human rights defenders there is a consultation between the State and civil society.”

. 12th HRC session - 25 September 2009

“We would like to inform you that during the present year there have been visits to Colombia by the Special Rapporteur of extrajudicial or arbitrary executions and the Special Rapporteur for on human rights defenders, the Special Rapporteur on fundamental freedoms of indigenous communities and we hope that by the end of the present year we will have the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers.

With regards to concrete and positive actions in the implementation of accepted recommendations and voluntary commitments, I would like to mention the fact the government of Colombia wishes to continue to progress in improving guarantees for the important work of human rights defenders in Colombia. With this regard, I would like to report the words of the President on September 17th during the visit of the Special Rapporteur for on human rights defenders: “The work of human rights defenders is a necessary and legitimate action for democracy in a country like Colombia which is proud to be completely open to come under to scrutiny with this regard.” For that reason new measures have been adopted on the work of the Intelligence of the State and, following recommendations of the OHCHR, a clearing out of the Intelligence archives has been ordered. This task will be undertaken by the National Government with the cooperation of the OHCHR.

In parallel of the initial amount of 50 million dollars, a fund was established for the reparation of victims of violence, the fight against impunity has been stepped up and, along with civil society, an agenda in favour of guarantees for the human rights defenders was developed.”



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. 13th HRC session - 19 March 2010

“The most important developments made are in the fight against violence, protection of the population, decrease in the crime rates, fight against armed groups, strengthening of a demobilization programmes, decreasing number of murders, enforced disappearances and allegations of torture. With regards to the fight against discrimination, we are continuing our efforts in the implementation of measures and programmes that can fight in a practical manner all forms of discriminations, including sexual orientations ones.”

. 14th HRC session - 11 June 2010

“We would like to provide information on the progress and the state of implementation of recommendations and voluntary pledges.

Thanks to measures of security acts of terrorism have decreased from 1645 in 2002 to 486 in 2009. In this area it is important to mention that kidnappings have fallen from 2882 in 2002 to 213 in 2009. There has also been a positive trend in homicides from 28.831 in 2002 to 15.817 in 2009. Indigenous people have been a priority on the agenda of the government but there are still many challenges to be faced. In this regard I would like to inform the Council that a forum with the Awa people has been initiated as well as a Safeguard Plan is being launched.

Similarly with regards to racial discrimination, last May we adopted a new policy for the promotion of the rights of the Afro descendents which includes education and training with different focuses. Colombia is also fully committed to approve compensations for victims of crime. Thus far more than 280.000 victims have denounced violent actions against them. Also trough the implementation law on justice and peace we have tied up more than 45.000 criminals. During 2009, 11.000 families received compensation for a total amount of 100 million dollars. For the end of this year we hope that 15.000 more families will receive compensation for a total sum of 150 million dollars. Similarly it is important to mention that there has been progress with regards to the struggle against impunity, especially the issue for the sentencing for crimes against trade unions members. From 10 sentences in 2002 we now have 217 in 2009.

Finally, with great satisfaction, I would like to refer to a figure which reaffirm that in Colombia, in spite of the difficulties we are facing, freedom of association, expression and opinion are fully supported. This figure has to be seen in more than 15 millions Colombians who exercised, the last 30th May, their right to vote with full democratic guarantees and in the context of the more safe and peaceful elections of our recent history.”

. 15th HRC session - 23 September 2010

“The vice President Angelino Garzón is committed since the beginning to consolidate a comprehensive policy to promote and protect human rights and to develop the National Human Rights Action Plan.

In relation to the fight against all forms of discrimination I wish to underscore what done by that the Human Rights Observatory diagnosis on the situation of communities afro-descendents and diagnosis on indigenous communities. This would enable to move forward in implementing policy and drawing more effective programme to promote the rights of this people.

In the field of dialogue with civil society and the protection of its leaders we continue to work with civil society for the protection of their leaders. The president of Republic has announced that a bill will be drawn up to allow for the handing over of land to the victims of violence with the clear commitment to



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seek practical and effective redress and another initiative to promote the adoption of a law on the reparation of victims using a comprehensive approach. During the current year in the framework of the Law Justice and Peace 120 days of care for victims have taken place at the benefit of 19.000 people. Colombia continues to make progress on the recommendations and commitments to fight against impunity for grave violations of human rights. We can say before this Council today that the executors of the assassination of the indigenous leader Edwin Legarda has been condemned to 40 years in prison by the Colombian justice."

. 16th Session of the Human Rights Council - 18 March 2011

"Currently we are working on the fifth national report of the state of implementation of the Universal Periodic Review. In connection with the most recent developments concerning the implementation of the Universal Periodic Review in Colombia, in December 2010 the National Congress adopted the law endorsing the protection of all persons against enforced disappearances. Also, just recently, the High Commissioner's Office received a detailed report concerning the state of implementation of 73 recommendations made by that office, by the treaty bodies and the special procedures to Colombia."

. 17th Session of the Human Rights Council – 9 June 2011

" Colombia is faithful to its voluntary commitment to report periodically on progress made on implementation of the UPR, therefore, in May published the fifth report on implementation on the recommendations accepted and voluntary commitments given in the context of the UPR. The report is available in the website of the Presidential Program for Human Rights of the government. [...] I would like to underscore there is links to the rights of the victims of violence in Colombia, on the 31st of December 2010, administrative compensation has been provided to more than 16,000 families amounting to a sum of 170 million dollars. The process which began in 2005 with the Justice and Peace Act enable Colombia to have a measure to provide real assistance to victims and the National Congress recently adopted the law on victims and land restitution. That Act is the most ambitious project for reconciliation through the institutionalization of a government policy to provide care, assistance, comprehensive reparation and guarantees of non repetition to more than 4 million victims of violence."

.19th Session of the Human Rights Council – 16 March 2012

"Thus, in the area of combating all forms of discrimination, at the end of 2011, an anti-discrimination law was adopted which establishes penalties for acts of violence and discrimination against anyone on the grounds of race, gender, religion, belief, political or philosophical opinion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation or gender identity. At the same time we are moving forward in the implementation of specific actions and programmes with a differentiated approach aiming at promoting and protecting the rights of specific sectors of our people such as persons of African descent, indigenous people, displaced persons, minorities, and the LGBTIs segment of population. We continue to be resolute improving our capacity to provide better protection and guarantees to vulnerable sectors threatened by violence. We have established the National Unit for Protection under the Ministry of the Interior which clusters different protection programmes so as to make them more efficient. We have enacted law 1453 which criminalises actions and behaviours that attack or violate the rights of trade union freedoms. The national government has been paying particular attention to the protection of social leaders and activists who promote restitution of land and currently working on giving protection guarantees to 175 people and we hope that by the end of the year the protection programme will encompass 400 persons. We will spare no effort to achieve the effective implementation of the law on victims and restitution of land with a view to paying the historical debt we owe to the victims of violence".

.22nd Session of the Human Rights Council – 15 March 2013



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"I am taking the floor because I would like to share some of the national efforts achieved, especially in the area of the protection of human rights defenders. I'd like to mention that the policy of Colombia involves cooperation with human rights defenders, because we recognize the value of the work of the defenders in terms of the programs and plans for the promotion and protection from violations of rights, and Colombia extends the necessary legal guarantees to human rights defenders so that they can work in a safe and free environment. In order to reinforce this in 2011 there was a program for the protection of human rights defenders which seeks to ensure that there is a policy for the protection of people who run a risk because of their humanitarian or social activity. In 2012 we created a national unit for protection which is covered by the state. With these measures we have integrated into one single program the various protection programs, including human rights defenders. The protection program has a total budget of 110,000 million pesos. We have invested about 52,000 million pesos for protection, of which 15 million have gone to the protection of human rights defenders specifically. I think it is important to mention that the protection program is unique in the world and it has been mentioned internationally. It is a very good practice that Colombia would like to share with other countries."