

# *Colombian President Says Peace Talks Advancement is Good News*

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Havana, June 7 (RHC) Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said the announcement of the advancement of the peace talks in Havana and the upcoming addressing of the issue related to the victims of the Colombian conflict is big news.

The representatives at the peace dialog from the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces-People's Army (FARC-EP) agreed to three mechanisms that will allow advance the discussion on the issue related to the victims and the end of the conflict.

A historic and expert commission on the conflict and its victims will be set up, according to the announcement.

In all ten guidelines for the discussion on the victims issue, the parties agreed, among other topics, to bring a first delegation of those affected by the conflict and to call three regional forums and one regional meeting in the cities of Cali and Valle de Cauca, in July.

The Colombian president said in several occasions that the victims of the over-50-year conflict are the real protagonists of peace and its main beneficiaries, so they deserve compensation, justice and truth, and to know that they will not again be victimized.

In a joint communiqué on Saturday, the parties taking place in the peace dialog, underway since 2012, expressed their determination to meet the rights of the victims, which is part and parcel of all guarantees for peace.

The discussion on the issue, out of six on the peace agenda, will focus on the rights of the victims and the clearing out of the truth, among other issues.

Such discussion will need the participation of the victims through different means and at different occasions. A delegation with large representativeness of those affected will travel to Havana for the debates.

Three members of the two sides will make up a technical sub-commission to open discussions on the end of the conflict, point three on the agenda, the communiqué explains.

The next round of talks will focus on the victims, which will require the setting up of a historic commission on the conflict. This commission will not replace the fact-finding mechanism already established.

The guerrillas and the government asked the United Nations Office in Colombia and the Center following the Peace Dialog at the National University to organize forums on the issue and suggested three regional meetings and one at the national level.

A last accord by the parties refers to the setting up of a sub-commission on gender, in which national and foreign experts will review and guarantee that the agreements reached thus far along with a possible final accord have the appropriate gender-related focus.

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