

# *Colombian Government Agrees to Hold Talks with Striking Teachers*

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Bogota, May 1 (RHC- Xinhua) -- Colombian Education Minister Gina Parody said Thursday the government has agreed to negotiate with the teachers' union leaders to end a week-long strike.

"President Juan Manuel Santos has given us precise and clear instructions to accept the national ombudsman's proposal (to negotiate) with the Fecode (Colombian Federation of Education Workers)," Parody said.

"The most important thing is for the children to be able to return to classes very soon," Parody said. Some nine million students around the country have been left without classes since the strike was launched on April 23rd.

Fecode President Luis Grubert welcomed the decision, calling on teachers to continue the strike until the union leaders' demands are met by authorities, including a reasonable salary increase and better healthcare.

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