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## STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

### **United Nations Security Council Meeting: “Safeguarding Lives, Sustaining Peace: Enhancing Mine Action for Stabilization, Protection, Recovery, and Inclusion”**

**New York – 12 December 2024**

#### **Global Commitment and Collective Action towards a Mine-Free World**

As one of the countries most affected by the impact of landmines, Colombia recognizes this session as a crucial opportunity to consider and discuss the achievements and challenges faced in mitigating this threat. Antipersonnel mines not only hinder development and perpetuate cycles of poverty and violence in our states, but also maim bodies and destroy dreams. In the face of these challenges, mine action is a global responsibility that demands joint, sustained efforts and decisive action.

During the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in November 2024, Colombia reaffirmed its commitment to actions aimed at the universalization and compliance with the Convention's provisions. In this context, we highlight our concern regarding the recent report from the Anti-Personnel Mine Monitor, which reports over 5,700 victims in 2023, of which 84% were civilians, including children who represent one-third of the victims.

In this regard, Colombia categorically rejects the transfer and use of antipersonnel mines under any circumstance and by any actor, due to their indiscriminate effects, which violate the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. These weapons undermine the balance between legitimate military action and the protection of human life, which is particularly concerning in the context of new or prolonged conflicts. The devastating impact of these artefacts undermines efforts to achieve peace, stability, and human security.

For Colombia, progress in the removal of antipersonnel mines is closely linked to our peacebuilding efforts. To date, we have cleared 83% of the Colombian territory suspected of contamination, thanks to the collaboration between national institutions, civil society, and international cooperation. However, critical challenges persist, such as the installation of mines by non-state actors, geographical



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complexities, and the need for sustainable financing for humanitarian demining and comprehensive victim assistance. Despite these obstacles, Colombia continues to move forward. For example, in 2024, we strengthened our technical capacities by updating humanitarian demining standards, incorporating differential approaches, particularly for indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, who have been disproportionately affected. Furthermore, we have prioritized mine risk education and the empowerment of victims as agents of change in their communities. Colombia's progress would not have been possible without the technical and financial support of the international community.

Peace, security, development and human rights are fundamental pillars of the United Nations system and form the basis of collective security. These principles are deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing, as established in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (A/RES/60/1). In this context, we call on states, donors, and international organizations to renew their commitment and ensure the allocation of resources to address these challenges effectively.

In the context of this meeting, Colombia would like to emphasize the following key aspects:

- The inclusion of mine action activities has proven essential for stabilization and peacebuilding in post-conflict contexts. These actions are crucial to ensuring that both civilian and military components possess the technical, operational, and logistical capacities necessary to address the threats posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war, and improvised explosive devices.
- In Colombia, mine action constitutes an essential component of the 2016 Peace Agreement. This approach has enabled the integration of innovative measures, such as the establishment in 2018 of a humanitarian demining organization composed of former FARC combatants. This organization remains active, carrying out demining operations in strategically important areas previously controlled by them during the armed conflict. Additionally, information provided by former combatants has been instrumental in identifying and mapping areas contaminated by mines. These actions also form part of restorative measures outlined in sanctions imposed by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, thus reinforcing Colombia's commitment to reconciliation and transitional justice.
- In our country, the UN and various civil society organizations have played a significant role in implementing activities related to the prevention of mine



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accidents and providing comprehensive assistance to mine victims. The 2024 Humanitarian Plan identified approximately 600,000 people at risk of mine-related accidents, underscoring the importance of resources from international cooperation to effectively address this need. The Colombian State has developed a risk prevention methodology focusing on education, which enhances the capacities of students, parents, and teachers in areas exposed to the danger of mines. This strategy is aligned with the Safe Schools Initiative launched in 2024, which aims to ensure threat-free educational environments.

- It is imperative to strengthen coordination among UN agencies to ensure the effective implementation of mine-related activities at all stages of peace operations. While Colombia has achieved an effective response to humanitarian emergencies, the stabilization phase continues to face significant challenges. There is a need for an increase in resources to complete the clearance of still-contaminated areas and to strengthen sustainable development efforts in areas already declared mine-free. An additional challenge lies in intensifying advocacy strategies aimed at non-state armed actors who continue to use mines indiscriminately. This practice has increased the number of civilian victims since the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2016, highlighting the urgency of adopting effective measures to address this problem in the post-conflict context.
- In Colombia, prevention efforts have prioritized ensuring equitable access to mine risk education activities, while also promoting greater participation of women in humanitarian demining work. Although 12% of reported civilian victims in the country are women, it is crucial to more decisively address the impact faced by women caregivers, who bear additional responsibilities when their partners or children are affected. Strengthening the economic autonomy of these women, alongside specific training in ethnic communities, is of great relevance for the country and aligns with the principles outlined in the Women, Peace and Security agenda.
- Protecting children and adolescents from the impact of antipersonnel mines poses significant challenges in Colombia, particularly in ensuring their rehabilitation throughout their life cycle and their continued participation in the educational system. While national capacities in psychosocial care are included in response strategies, the challenge remains to ensure effective and timely access to these services in areas with the greatest demand. Currently, most



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services are concentrated in major cities, limiting their reach in the more affected rural areas.

Colombia stands as a testament to our collective capacity and reflects our conviction that a mine-free world is possible through international cooperation, compliance with existing legal instruments, and the collective will of states. We call on states, donors, and international organizations to renew their commitment to the universalization of the Ottawa Convention and to ensure the necessary technical and financial support to tackle this global challenge. We also extend a respectful invitation to the 33 states that are not yet parties to the Convention to join this common effort.