

London, 16 November 2016

Dear President Santos,

Kofi Annan, *Chair*
Martti Ahtisaari
Ela Bhatt, *Elder Emeritus*
Lakhdar Brahimi
Gro Harlem Brundtland
Fernando H. Cardoso, *Elder Emeritus*
Jimmy Carter, *Elder Emeritus*
Hina Jilani
Ricardo Lagos
Graça Machel
Mary Robinson
Desmond Tutu, *Elder Emeritus*
Ernesto Zedillo

The Elders warmly congratulate you on receiving the Leadership for the Americas award from the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington, DC, tonight.

It has required vision and courage on all sides to reach not one, but two, peace agreements to end the longest armed conflict in the Western hemisphere. Despite setbacks, you have persevered in your efforts. In doing so, you have earned your place in history as the president who built on the will of the Colombian people and the efforts of many of his compatriots, including his predecessors former Presidents Betancur, Gaviria, Pastrana and Uribe, to finally secure peace and end a half century of conflict.

You have shown great vision in putting victims and their rights at the centre of this peace agreement and engaging with them during the negotiations. This is a precedent that we hope will serve as a model for peace processes in other parts of the world. The agreement also finds a balance between the often competing imperatives of peace and justice, and will enable previously neglected rural communities to benefit from development and government services in the future.

We know that the difficult challenge of building peace on the ground lies ahead, once the revised agreement with the FARC is signed and ratified – as we are confident it will be. Our faith in the outcome is rooted in the knowledge that the Colombian political leaders and people possess deep civic maturity and recognise the historic opportunity that you have helped open up.

The Elders is an organisation founded by Nelson Mandela, who we believe would be profoundly pleased by the exemplary Colombian peace process. The Elders include a number of former Presidents from the Americas: Jimmy Carter (USA), Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil), Ricardo Lagos (Chile) and Ernesto Zedillo (Mexico). In addition, they can count four Nobel Peace Prize laureates among current and emeritus members (Kofi Annan, Martti Ahtisaari, Jimmy Carter, and Desmond Tutu). All stand united in applauding the Nobel Prize Committee's decision this year to honour you and, through you, all those who worked tirelessly behind-the-scenes for the same objective.

As you and the people of your great country go forward together, you should know that you can count on The Elders to be by your side, and to assist in any way that might be useful in ensuring that real peace finally prevails throughout Colombia.

On behalf of my fellow Elders, I wish to convey to you our highest appreciation and esteem.



Kofi Annan
Chair
The Elders