

## **Juan Manuel Santos**

Former President of Colombia; a Nobel Peace Laureate who led complex peace negotiations, ending over 50 years of intractable civil war.

- President of Colombia 2010-2018
- Led tough, complex negotiations with the FARC to secure end to 52-year internal armed conflict
- Nobel Peace Laureate 2016
- Champion of biodiversity

*"I am honoured and delighted to join The Elders and support their efforts to promote peace, justice and reconciliation worldwide."*

### **President of Colombia**

Following ministerial appointments in finance, trade and defence, Santos assumed the Presidency in 2010 and was re-elected in 2014.

In his inaugural address Santos named seeking peace through dialogue as his top priority. In September 2012, he publicly announced that his government had entered formal negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). This broke with his predecessors' approach of fighting the FARC guerrilla forces with the aim of defeating them militarily, rather than attempting dialogue.

This tenacious step was followed by complex negotiations, led with skill and determination in Havana, Cuba. Santos overcame several significant setbacks in order to finally complete the process in late 2016, putting an end to over five decades of armed conflict.

### **Nobel Peace Laureate**

As a result of his resolve and dedication to achieve peace and reconciliation in Colombia, Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016. The Nobel Committee added that the distinction "is a tribute to the Colombian people who, despite great hardships and abuses, have not given up hope of a just peace, and to all the parties who have contributed to the peace process".

Santos made steps to ensure a just transition, and to lay the groundwork for eventual unity and reconciliation. He emphasised not only justice for victims, but importantly the desire for truth – inaugurating a historic Truth Commission to investigate the victimisation of civilians during the war.

### **Environmental Advocate**

Santos is an outspoken advocate for the protection of biodiversity. During his presidency he significantly expanded protected areas in Colombia and strengthened the Ministry of the Environment. One of his biggest achievements in this area was the expansion of marine protected areas from 1.2 million hectares in 2010 to 12.8 million in 2018.

In 2017, Santos was awarded the Kew International Medal for his efforts to conserve Colombia's natural environment.

He was honoured by the National Geographic Society for his unwavering commitment to conservation in 2017.