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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Fundación Abba Colombia, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[29 May 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Efforts to ensure environmental protection within the framework of human rights

Following up the intergenerational responsibility principle under which is recognized that the natural resources' ownerships belong to future generations, Foundation Abba Colombia considers that efforts to guarantee environmental protection have a deep relationship with humanity's welfare. Even so, environmental degradation has brought a significant amount of flora and fauna in all continents to the brink of extinction and has made it difficult to consolidate a viable life project to many communities especially at the global south.

In this way, Abba Colombia Foundation remembers to the Human Rights Council and all participating actors of this session that global transformations have put discussions about natural resources' protection in the international system's agenda, including the relationship between the environment and human rights, getting a normative body as a result constituted by resolutions, principles, and treaties intended to promote actions that guarantee sustainable usage of the environment.

Abba Colombia as a nonprofit legal person made in accordance with the Colombian state's legal system considers it necessary to mention that Colombia is a world leader in biodiversity, furthermore, this country shares forest and water sources with neighboring countries, including the Amazon, whose importance rebounds in humanity's welfare, a reason why its conservation must be an interest of the whole international community because environmental issues don't know political limits.

Despite the mentioned above, there are challenges in Colombia to guarantee the rights to a healthy environment on equitable conditions for the whole population, independently that this right is recognized by different international instruments, including the Resolution about "The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment" approved on July 28th, 2022, by the United Nations General Assembly(1)

Abba Colombia remembers that Colombia has experienced a long civil war whose consequences have seriously affected natural resources of its territory, because amount armed groups have realized acts that damages environmental integrity, including a great network building of illegal land access in forest zones, as well as the illegal use of natural resources and the change of legal crops for illegal ones(2)

Besides that, land control by those groups over different regions hasn't allowed dynamic work for land productive development from different scopes. In this sense, one of the more serious armed conflict's consequences is the fight against drug trafficking crops based on glyphosate aerial spraying. So, Abba Colombia foundation has had knowledge that this practice could generate carcinogenic consequences when its components entry on direct contact with the human body(3)

In addition, aerial spraying has forced amount communities to leave their territories, as this practice affects all crops type without discrimination and pollutes water sources needed to guarantee all species' life, putting biodiversity at risk by bringing fauna and flora death in every affected territory. In this situation, many people have been forced to move to search for better living conditions, which has growth social gaps(4)

The last paragraph mentions represent a violation of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights of the affected communities, indigenous ones among them, whose identity and worldview as a group is directly related to the territory in which they live (5) . Therefore, Abba Colombia makes a call for States to put the communities at the center of the decisions about illegal crop fighting, as it is necessary to apply methods where the balance would be inclined to people's welfare and environment instead of the efficiency of illegal plant destruction.

Talking about the achievements of the 2016 Peace Agreement among the National Government and the FARC-EP, Abba Colombia considers that the contemplation to land

access was a strong advance to strengthen peasant economies within the law, by following settlement programs and resettlement of vulnerable peasant workers, especially as consequence of the civil war (6). With this, there have been searched for food production, illegal crop substitution, and environmental protection.

Besides that, the Agreement includes natural resources protection and reforestation in the Developments Programs with Territorial Focus (PDET), being it a special category for the more affected municipalities by the armed conflict, where dialogues about alternatives is a priority to guarantee a sustainable transformation of affected territories by the war. Additionally, the Final Agreement includes the Integral National Program for Substitution of Illegal Usage Crops, with the purpose to promote voluntary substitution of illegal usage crops among territorial development projects that contribute to poverty conditions and marginality overcoming which amount peasant families have been forced to along the Colombian history(7)

In this way, agricultural activities diversification has been stimulated in the countryside strengthening communities' financial autonomy and sustainability. Abba Colombia points out that crop substitution is a viable alternative to guarantee a sustainable transition based on human welfare, this is the reason why a main pillar of the Organization is self-sustaining project management with affected communities by the armed conflict, as an initiative to contribute to peacebuilding by supporting communitarian resilience processes and economic independence.

In consequence, Abba Colombia Foundation considers that peacebuilding has a key relationship with the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development, being that a transition towards a peaceful context based on a human rights protection regime represents an opportunity to relieve affected ecosystems because of the armed conflict, as well as to re-think initiatives for economic progress focused on sustainable development from continuous civil society participation (8)

Since 2022 Abba Colombia has worked in teaching processes about environmental management and natural resources protection as the main pillar in advocacy processes and communities supporting affected regions by the climate crisis, including La Mojana region at the Bolivar Department, being a deeply affected zone by flooding. Furthermore, the Organization has implemented biodegradable packaging in humanitarian kits distribution in every mission, as a compromise with the environment and the 2030 Agenda fulfillment (9)

(1)<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3982508?ln=es>

(2)https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/sites/default/files/Fotos2017/boletin_no12_-_parques_naturales_14-11-2017.pdf

(3)<https://elementaddhh.org/posicionando-la-politica-de-drogas-en-el-derecho-internacional-de-los-derechos-humanos/>

(4)<https://elementaddhh.org/posicionando-la-politica-de-drogas-en-el-derecho-internacional-de-los-derechos-humanos/>

(5)<https://elementaddhh.org/posicionando-la-politica-de-drogas-en-el-derecho-internacional-de-los-derechos-humanos/>

(6)<https://www.jep.gov.co/Documents/Acuerdo%20Final/Acuerdo%20Final.pdf>

(7)<https://www.jep.gov.co/Documents/Acuerdo%20Final/Acuerdo%20Final.pdf>

(8) https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/sites/default/files/Fotos2017/boletin_no12_-_parques_naturales_14-11-2017.pdf

(9)<https://abbacol.org/proyectos/>