

February 2017

# Peace and environmental protection in Colombia

**PROPOSALS FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT**



- The report is based on the contributions of participants at a working group meeting organized by the Inter-American Dialogue in Bogotá on August 18, 2016, as well as interviews with participants and other experts.
- Participants included:
  - **Amylkar Acosta**, Executive Director, National Federation of Departments; Former Minister of Mines and Energy
  - **Carlos Alberto Botero López**, Vice Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development
  - **Alcibíades Escué**, Mayor of Toribío, Cauca
  - **Alejandro Gamboa**, General Director, Presidential Agency for International Cooperation
  - **Rubén Lizarralde**, President, Colombian Chamber of Petroleum Goods and Services (Campetrol); Ex-Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
  - **Julia Miranda Londoño**, General Director, National Park System
  - **Wendy Arenas**, Advisor for Issues on the Environment and Sustainability, Post-conflict, Human Rights and Security Ministry
  - **Carlos Manuel Herrera Santos**, Vice President of Sustainable Development, National Association of Entrepreneurs of Colombia (ANDI)
  - **Mateo Estrada**, Territory, Environment and Climate Change Coordinator, National Organization of the Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC)
  - **Martín von Hildebrand**, Founding Director, Fundación Gaia Amazonas; Former Head of Indigenous Affairs
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# Key points of the peace accord

## **Comprehensive agricultural development policy**

- Infrastructure/technical assistance programs aimed at stimulating the agricultural economy
- Social development: health, education, housing
- 15-year period for investment in rural development programs
  - \*Aims to diminish rural poverty while curbing land inequality\*

## **End of the conflict**

- Bilateral & definitive cease fire
- Disarmament & reintegration of FARC combatants

## **Solution to the problem of illicit drugs (& trafficking)**

- Illicit crop substitution & coca eradication

## **Political participation**

- Establishment of mechanisms that allow the fair & safe political participation of the FARC & other dissident groups

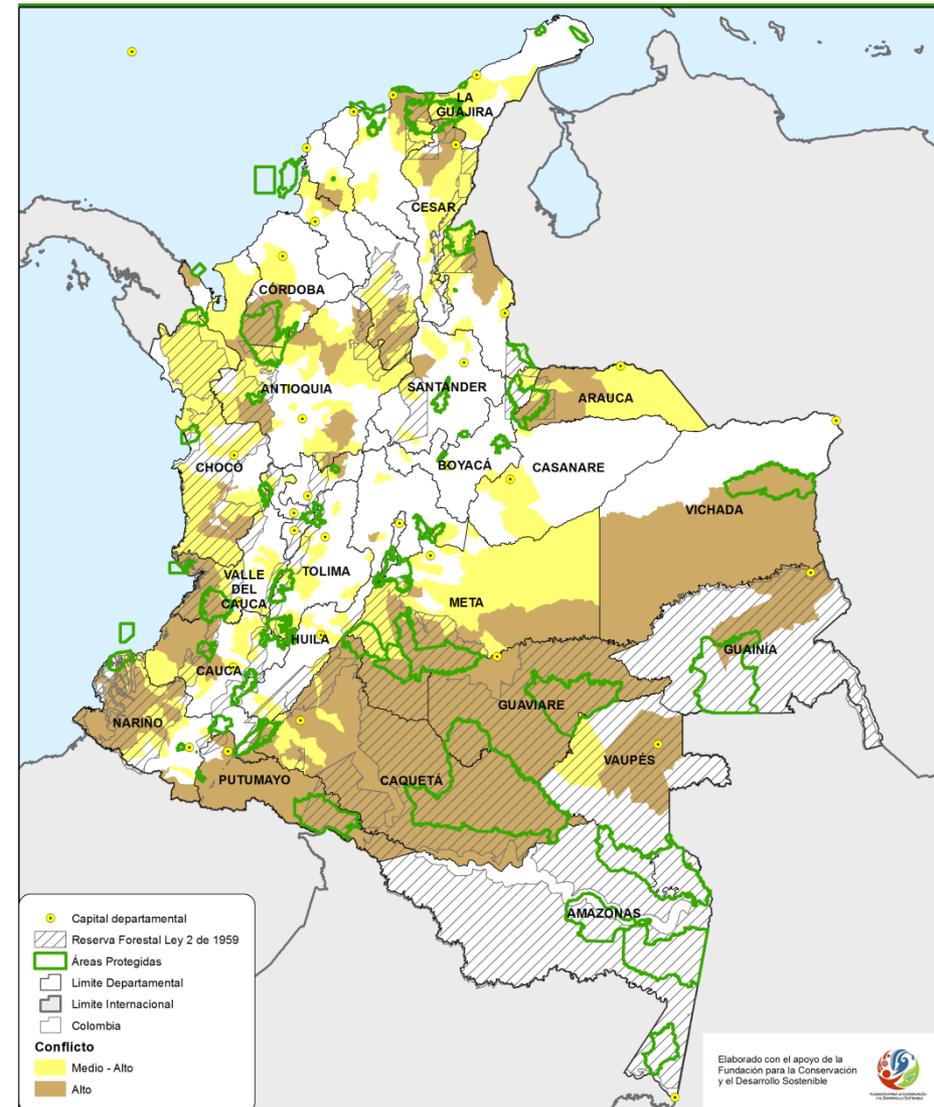
## **Victims**

- Compensation & truth for victims & their families

Level of Conflict by Municipality in Colombia, Protected Areas and Forest Reserves, 2015

# Overlap of conflict and environment

- Often, the areas in which the conflict has been most intense are also home to a significant share of the country's natural resources.
- Of the 125 municipalities that require special attention in the post-conflict context, 90% have some type of environmental restriction.
- 41 of 47 “High Priority” municipalities have nature parks or forest reserves.
- In 8 “Priority” municipalities the entire area is regulated by some form of protection.

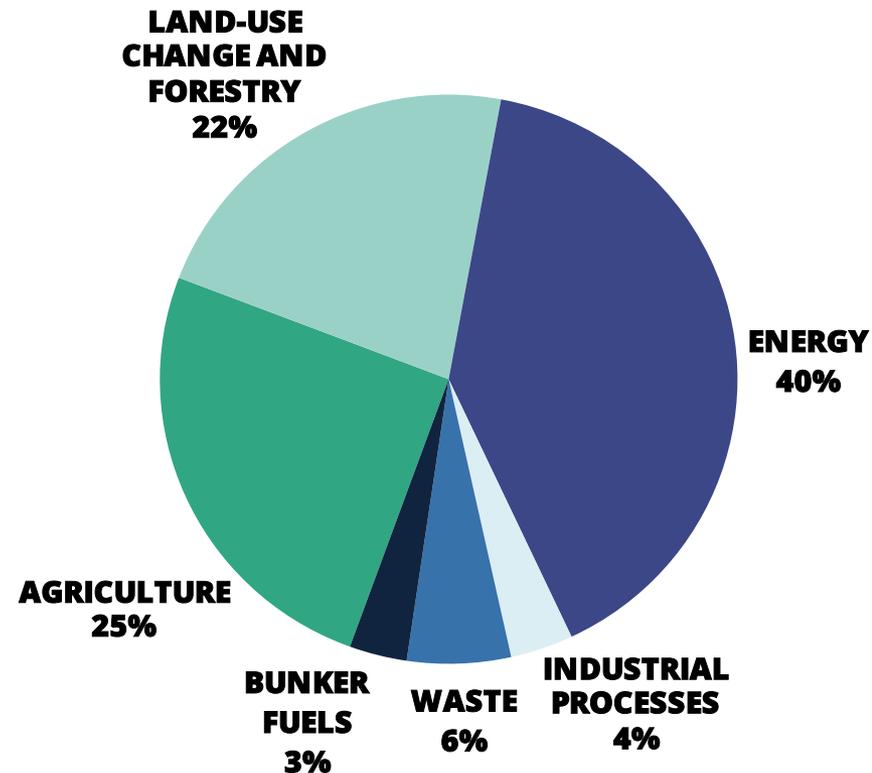


Source: Prepared by the Fundación para la Conservación y el Desarrollo Sostenible, Bogotá, D.C., Colombia, with data from the National Planning Department–Special Projects Group 2015, presented in the National Development Plan, 2014–2018.

# Climate change in Colombia

- Environmental conservation in Colombia is necessary to fulfill commitments made in COP21: 20% reduction of greenhouse emissions by 2030.
- In 2012, Colombia emitted 178.3 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, of which about half was related to agriculture and land use, especially the conversion of woodland into pasture.
- With the world's eighth most extensive forest coverage, Colombia is an important carbon sink.

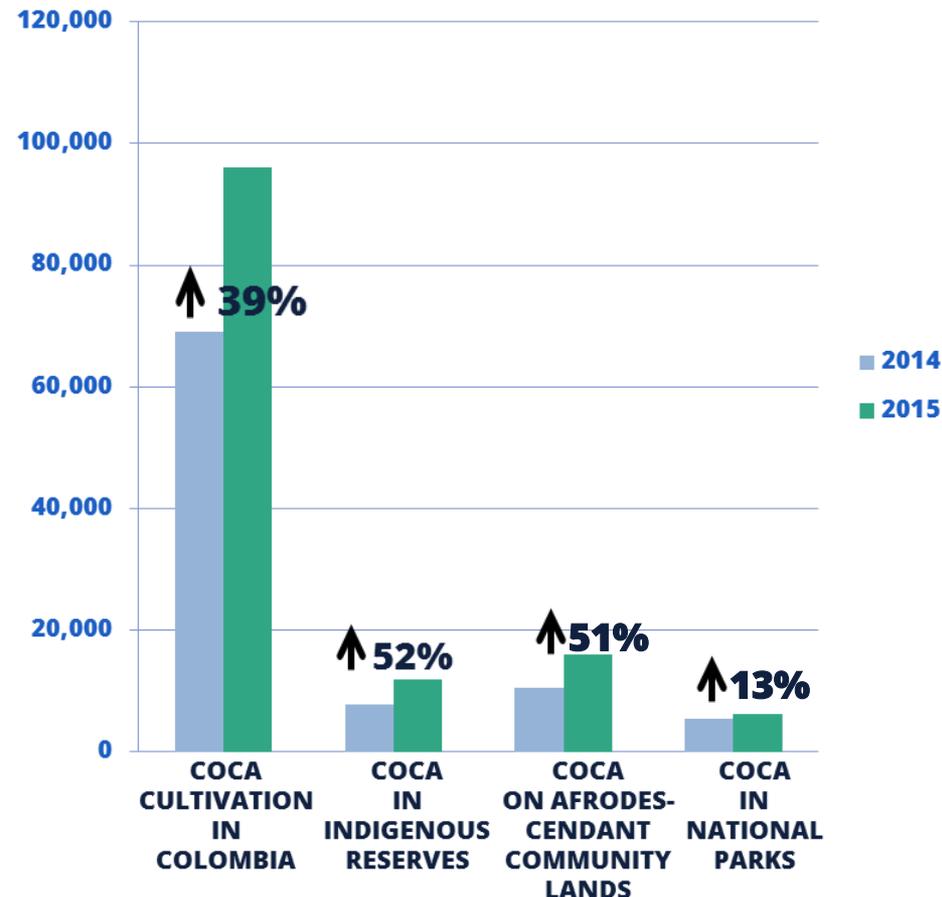
Greenhouse Gas Emissions (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e) by Sector in Colombia, 2012



# Environmental costs of war

- The armed conflict has had environmental costs such as deforestation and contamination due to coca cultivation and illegal mining.
- Given the weak state presence in conflict zones, land occupation has often been spontaneous and unplanned.
- About 124,000 hectares of forest were deforested in 2015.
- Almost half of the deforested area was concentrated in the Amazon region, followed by the Andean region with 24%.
- The National Planning Department has calculated that for every year of peace Colombia will save 7.1 trillion pesos (about US\$540 million) in conflict-related environmental costs.

Coca Cultivation in Colombia, 2014-2015

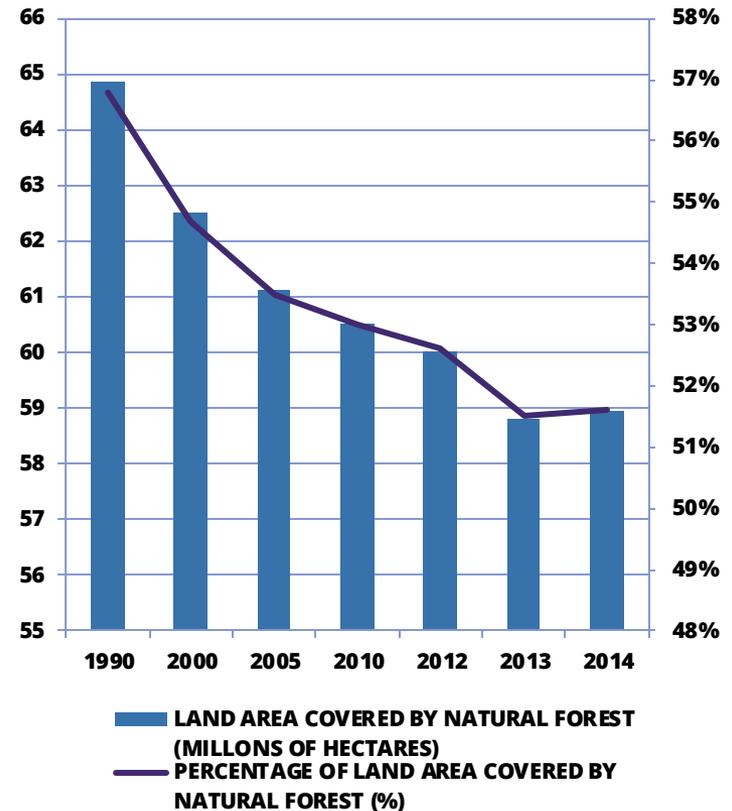


Environmental risk factors related to the post-conflict period

# Conflict over land use and occupation

- Efforts to legalize ownership and provide titles, coupled with the return of displaced people and others in connection with the Land Restitution Law of 2011, will put pressure on land and natural resources.
- One of these pressures is a possible increase in deforestation in new settlement areas, especially those that overlap with rural road building programs.
- In already deforested areas, pressure could arise from the degradation of poor or overexploited soils.
- There are disputes over land tenure in 37 of 59 national parks
- 1,447 families and 4,476 individuals live in and engage in economic activities in protected areas.

Surface Area Covered by Natural Forest in Colombia, 1990-2014



# Arrival of new economic actors

- Legitimate economic activities might be undertaken in conflict-affected areas in an unplanned and unsustainable way.
- The plans underway devote 10 million hectares of the Orinoquia to agriculture.
- The National Hydrocarbons Agency has identified 23 sedimentary basins with exploitation potential in Santander, Putumayo, Orinoquia, Magdalena Medio and Pacífico.
- Many requests for mining titles are in areas of great environmental value, including indigenous reserve areas in the Amazon.

USE OF COLOMBIAN LAND, CURRENT USE COMPARED TO APPROPRIATE USE, 2012

LAND USE	MOST PRODUCTIVE USE (millions of hectares)	CURRENT USE (millions of hectares)
Agriculture	15	6
Productive Forestry	4	0.45
Livestock	8	38

# Reintegration of combatants into new economic sectors

- FARC has ~5,800 members in arms and a similar number of noncombatant supporters. An end to conflict is only sustainable if the economic and social reintegration of these combatants is guaranteed.
- Historically, 80% of demobilized individuals migrated to the cities. It is possible, however, that with the end of the conflict, more of these individuals will choose to remain in the countryside.
- One of the challenges is to provide options that allows environmental conservation to become a viable productive alternative.

# Challenges for the government

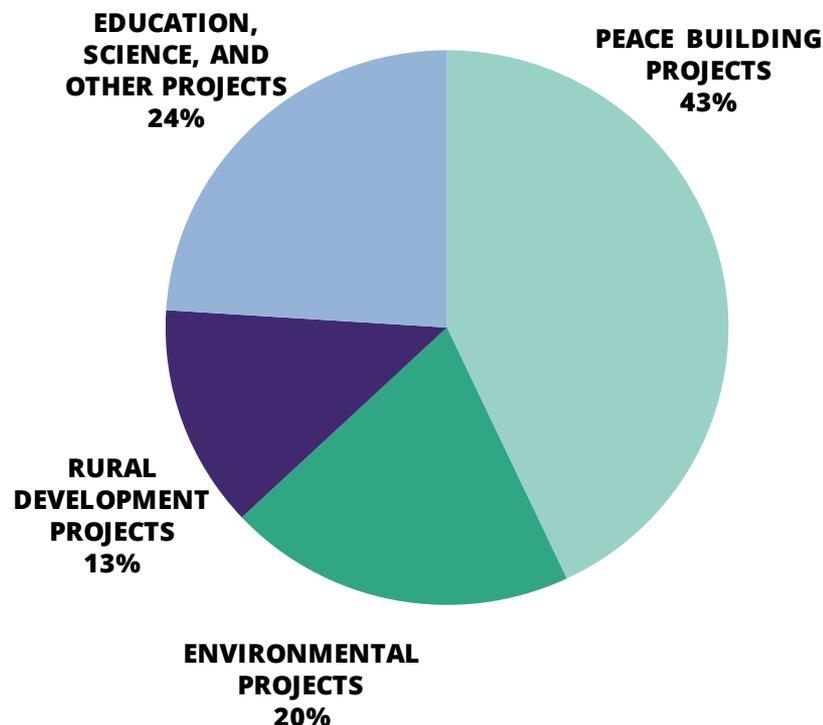
# Institutional and public policy design

- The primary institutional challenge for Colombia will be the **effective insertion of the state** in areas where it has been absent.
- Armed groups as well as the communities themselves regulated social and economic activities, including the management of natural resource. The state will have to **make use of existing formal and informal institutions**.
- **Land use plans** are among the most critical instruments for ensuring effective land management and environmental regulation at the local level. Land use plans are out of date in 86% of the national territory, and only 3% of them address rural areas.
- The 187 municipalities hardest hit by conflict are also the areas with the least local **institutional capacity**.
- The government aims to encourage greater citizen participation as a strategy to improve institutional capacity and make environmental policies more effective in these areas. This will depend on **strong local leadership and safe spaces for community participation**. In many conflict zones, however, social and environmental leaders have been murdered, intimidated or displaced.

# Economic and financial challenges

- Colombia will have to deal with post-conflict conditions in the context of fiscal deficit and spending cuts.
- Colombia's public spending on the environment sector is very low (0.5%, compared to 1-2% in OECD countries).
- In 2012, the National Environment System's budget was a third of what it had been in 1998.
- The government estimates that international cooperation could increase by 30% in the post-conflict period and be maintained up to 2020. The APC aims to secure \$3.3 billion between 2016-2021.
- National and local governments have various instruments at their disposal to improve financing of the environment, such as the implementation of "green taxes or broader use of payments for environmental services.

**INTERNATIONAL DONOR RESOURCES IN COLOMBIA, 2015**



Source: Presentation by Alejandro Gamboa, General Director, Presidential Agency for the International Cooperation of Colombia in the working group meeting "Retos ambientales del posconflicto en Colombia", organized by the Inter-American Dialogue in Bogotá, August 18, 2016. Datos del Sistema de Información de la Ayuda Oficial al Desarrollo de Colombia (SIAOD).



# Recommendations

# Improve access to information and include environmental considerations in long-term planning.

- **Improve and protect the quality of information on land use**
- **Link plans to mitigate climate change with post-conflict planning**

# Delineate protected areas

- **Limit agricultural extension**
- **Clearly demarcate strategic environmental areas**

# Reallocate state resources

- **Apply tax incentives and reassign subsidies to leverage environmental policy**
- **Reorient the mission of the security forces**
- **Strengthen payment arrangements for environmental services**
- **Simplify decision-making structures at the central level and define areas of authority**

# Strengthen and empower local authorities

- **Strengthen indigenous governments**
- **Strengthen the CARs and benefit from informal environmental institutions operating in these areas**

# Promote sustainable economic development initiatives

- **Consider alternative forms of integration and access to land**
- **Promote sustainable technologies in extractive industries**
- **Develop green markets**
- **Combine plans for the reintegration of former combatants and transitional justice with environmental conservation and restoration projects**

Thank you.

Lisa Viscidi  
Inter-American Dialogue  
[lviscidi@thedialogue.org](mailto:lviscidi@thedialogue.org)



[@lviscidi](https://twitter.com/lviscidi)  
+1 202-463-2571