

The Initiative for Inclusive Security

A Program of Hunt Alternatives Fund

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Contact: Katie Elbert
Ph: 617. 995.1925
Katie_Elbert@huntalternatives.org

Colombian Leaders Agree: Empowering Women Strengthens Their Democracy

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA – While it may not rule the headlines, Colombia remains embroiled in Latin America’s longest-running internal conflict. Peace talks between Colombian President Álvaro Uribe and rebel groups seemed within reach in October but many obstacles remain.

Women’s groups in Colombia are the leading advocates for renewed peace talks and are demanding inclusion in future negotiations. At the invitation of the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation (NCCR), from November 6–11, **The Initiative for Inclusive Security** will hold several workshops with policymakers, top-level government officials, international community representatives, civil society activists, and [Women Waging Peace Network](#) members. The workshops will aim to strengthen Colombian women’s contributions to creating a sustainable peace. Participants will discuss the importance of including the perspectives and expertise of women at every stage of the peace process.

The workshop will be led by Harriet C. (Hattie) Babbitt, who has extensive international experience as former US ambassador to the Organization of American States and former deputy administrator of the US Agency for International Development. A fluent Spanish speaker, Ambassador Babbitt participated in democratic initiatives in Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Paraguay, as well as in the Middle East and Central Europe. Ambassador Babbitt will be joined by a team of experts from The Initiative for Inclusive Security including Miki Jacevic, Inclusive Security’s deputy director, who has led over a dozen trainings and consultations in post-conflict areas.

“Despite their expertise, women often play an unrecognized role in preventing violence and resolving conflicts,” **said Ambassador Babbitt**. “Women in Colombia are leading efforts to stabilize the country—community by community. The decision makers in government and civil society working with us recognize that there is an opportunity for real progress, and both men and women have a stake in ending this decades long conflict. The work of NCCR is a critical next step in Colombia’s path to peace.”

At the end of October, in a speech before the United Nations Security Council, **Colombian Ambassador to the United Nations Claudia Blum**, praised the work of Inclusive Security in her country, stating that their work was “highlighting those elements that allow for the inclusion of gender perspectives in programs, projects, and activities devoted to peace building.”

The Initiative for Inclusive Security has been working in Colombia since 1999 and has built a strong network of women leaders. This is the third time in 15 months Inclusive Security has organized workshops and consultations in Colombia.

The Initiative for Inclusive Security, a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, advocates for the full participation of all stakeholders, especially women, in peace processes. Creating sustainable peace is achieved best by a diverse, citizen-driven approach. Of the many sectors of society currently excluded from peace processes, none is larger—or more critical to success—than women. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has connected more than 450 women experts with over 3,000 policy shapers to collaborate on fresh, workable solutions to long-standing conflicts across the globe. For more information visit www.HuntAlternatives.org.