

# The Initiative for Inclusive Security

A Program of Hunt Alternatives Fund

---

## COLOMBIA RECOMMENDATIONS

### CONSTRUCTING A SELF-CRITICAL SOCIETY THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE

*The following recommendations for ensuring women's inclusion in peace building were developed by a coalition of Colombian women convened by The Initiative for Inclusive Security in January 2007.*

#### TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS IN GENERAL

1. Colombian political parties and other interested actors should conduct a public campaign to encourage **women to run for office** and raise their visibility, including the development of specific programs to promote votes for women. The international community should fund and support such a campaign. In the short term—for the October 2007 elections—priority targets should be local contests with emphasis on the **mayoral races** with a target of a minimum of 30 percent female candidates.
2. By December 2007, the Colombian legislature should pass the proposed constitutional amendment setting **quotas for women on political party lists**. Once the amendment is approved, the legislature should pass a law defining the quota, taking into account lessons learned from similar processes in other countries.
3. The executive branch should ensure full implementation in local, regional, and national administrations of the **existing Law 581** passed in 2000, which regulates the adequate and effective participation of women in the executive. The *Procuraduría* should take appropriate measures in cases of noncompliance.
4. International donors should provide financial and technical support to independent Colombian institutions to organize **capacity building training for women candidates at all levels**, including forums on campaign financing.
5. International donors should provide financial support for the establishment of **awards to recognize women political leaders at all levels** who best promote the women's agenda.
6. In the short term, the international community should fund the **institutionalization of the Congressional Women's Caucus as a permanent mechanism of the Colombian national legislature**. The Colombian legislature and other Colombian actors should institutionalize similar caucuses within legislative bodies at the local and regional levels.

#### TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESSES

1. Colombian institutions should increase the **representation of women on all sides** to a minimum of 30 percent in formal and informal peace/dialogue processes, including as negotiators, facilitators, technical advisors, monitors, and observers. For example, actors should include women in the ongoing ELN peace talks and in the commissions to implement the Justice and Peace Law.
2. Colombian institutions should also ensure the inclusion of **women's needs and priorities** in all stages of peace/dialogue processes and their implementation mechanisms.
3. In order to foster an **atmosphere conducive to dialogue**, all parties should practice constructive self-criticism. Specifically, the international community should fund and support only inclusive initiatives that promote constructive dialogue on women, peace, and security, recognizing the need to avoid deepening existing divisions.
4. For the purpose of sharing lessons learned on successful approaches to coalition building, the

international community should fund and support the development of a case study on the **dialogue among women in the Colombian Congress**.

*Special attention to children involved in the conflict:*

5. By June 2007, UNICEF, with the support of other institutions and the collaboration of the Colombian government, should fund and execute research on the **status of children** involved with armed groups, including those girls and boys who have demobilized.
6. Based on the findings of research on the status of children involved with armed groups, the Colombian government and legislature should **develop public policy** and establish appropriate programs to address this issue.
7. International organizations involved in supporting the Colombian peace process and especially the Organization of American States and its Inter-American Children's Institute should prioritize children's issues and **include indicators on the welfare of children** in the demobilization process.
8. Most immediately, the Colombian government should locate the estimated 2,000<sup>1</sup> demobilized children who have not been accounted for in the AUC disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process.
9. As a prerequisite for peace talks and as a confidence-building measure, all armed actors should be required to **release all the children involved in the conflict**. The Colombian government should develop appropriate reintegration programs.

#### **PRIORITY NEXT STEPS FOR THE COLLOQUIUM DELEGATION**

1. With international funds and support, **organize a public campaign** to encourage women to run for office and raise their visibility, including the development of specific programs to promote votes for women. In the short term—for the 2007 elections—priority targets should be local contests with an emphasis on **mayoral races**. The delegation should also coordinate the organization of regional forums to increase women's participation as candidates and as voters.
2. **Lead in passing the constitutional amendment** setting quotas for women in political party lists. For the upcoming 2007 elections, the delegation **will enlist other Colombian actors to encourage** political parties to field a minimum of 30 percent of women candidates.
3. With financial and technical support from the international community, promote, **organize, and participate in capacity building trainings** for women candidates, including forums on campaign financing.
4. Encourage the Colombian legislature to **institutionalize the Women's Caucus** and similar initiatives at all legislative levels.
5. Host a meeting in Colombia with representatives of international agencies, government officials, the media, and civil society to **showcase these recommendations** and to seek support for inclusive programs.
6. Invite representatives of **The Wish List** and **Emily's List** to create similar mechanisms in Colombia.
7. The Congressional Women's Caucus will conduct **public oversight hearings on the implementation of law 581 of 2000**.

---

<sup>1</sup> Calculations based on "You'll Learn Not to Cry," a Human Rights Watch report on child combatants in Colombia published September, 2003 and on the counts of demobilized children from the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (*Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar*)