

# COLOMBIA



COLOMBIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by H.E. Ambassador Claudia Blum  
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General Debate for the High-level Segment

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*Please check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Allow me, before referring to the topic of our discussions, to express to the members and observers of this body, the immense happiness that fills the Colombian people today, as a result of the rescue by the National Army of 15 people kidnapped by the FARC terrorist group. Among those rescued, were Ingrid Betancourt, 11 members of our armed forces and three U.S. citizens. It is our desire to share this special day for Colombia with everyone here.

Mr. President,

I want to congratulate you for your work as president of the Economic and Social Council. We are pleased that such a high responsibility rests upon you, a Representative of a country from the region of Latin American and the Caribbean.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Antigua y Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

This substantive session is taking place in a juncture that presents important global challenges with clear implications in the context of sustainable development. Among others, we underscore climate change and the increasing intensity of natural disasters; the rise in oil and food prices; as well as the projections of global economic deceleration.

Without a doubt, such challenges pose serious risks for the effectiveness of development efforts undertaken at the national and international levels. But we are convinced that the urgent nature and inter-linkages in those various issues also entail a unique opportunity to address, in a committed manner and without further delay, the cooperative and broad measures that the situation requires. In this regard, Colombia would like to share the following considerations:

1. It is necessary to increase international technical and financial support to national efforts related to climate change adaptation. Given the escalation in the frequency and intensity of droughts and floods, as well as the abnormal variations of temperatures and rains, we should not only acknowledge the threat that this phenomenon poses in the environmental field, but also in the comprehensive framework of sustainable development. It is crucial to place more attention on the adaptation of the agricultural sector. Particularly, during times in which the increase of agricultural productivity and supply is critical.
2. In fact, if there is something that we can conclude on the global food situation, with all its complexities and multidimensional causes, it will be that the revitalization of agriculture in the developing world constitutes a fundamental field of action. The new agricultural boost must be supported by broader cooperation actions related to capacity building, technology transfer and greater access to international markets.
3. Baring this in mind, it is necessary to address the imbalances of the multilateral trading system. Progress in the reduction of protectionist measures and agricultural subsidies by the developed countries acquires today a sense of urgency in the context of the Doha Round. Such imbalances have notoriously discouraged investment and the advancement of the rural sector in the developing countries.
4. The issue of energy for sustainable development is another priority area for action. In face of the increasing global demand for energy and the substantial

rise in oil prices, the convenience of deepening the international stake for energy diversification as well as greater development and use of renewable energies is part of those priorities. In this regard, I would like to echo the encouraging words pronounced by Mr. Achim Steiner, Director of UNEP, during the first session. of this segment. We share his call for a more efficient and intelligent use of resources. We share the notion that paying attention to the renewable energy sector is no longer a luxury but a precondition in the context of sustainable development. It is necessary to facilitate investment and to create incentives that favor the transformation of the energy economy.

5. In the Colombian case, the production and use of alternative and renewable sources of energy constitutes a central element of our national energy and rural development policies. Specifically, we are implementing a policy on production and use of biofuels, from crops such as sugar cane and palm oil, which have not resulted in the replacement of fertile lands for food production, nor in the reduction of the national agro-alimentary supply. On the contrary, this production, carried out in harmony with food security and environmental protection policies, has resulted in a highly positive experience for my country. It has contributed to expand the agricultural and livestock sector, by generating thousands of new rural jobs, stimulating investments, research and technological development, and by promoting productivity in underutilized lands. Furthermore, it has resulted in progress in relation to supply, along with benefits for the environment, due to the implementation of policies and legislation on use expansion. At the present juncture, we expect to identify measures to accelerate and intensify the advancement on the mandatory mix of biofuels with gasoline and diesel.

Mr. President,

6. Another fundamental issue regarding sustainable development is the strengthening of international technical and financial cooperation. This is an area of high relevance for the work of the Council, especially, having in mind the mandate of the DCF. On this subject, Colombia would like to convey two concrete messages:
  - (a) First, the importance for the ECOSOC to contribute in strengthening international cooperation with middle-income countries, which face significant challenges in view of their internal asymmetries and the

sustained advancement in the fulfillment of the MDGs. It is vital that the international community complement these countries' efforts.

- (b) Second, we value the contribution that the Council can make in order to promote South-South Cooperation, as a priority action towards a more dynamic architecture for international cooperation. With the support of triangular modalities and a more active involvement of the United Nations system, this form of cooperation cannot only become an effective mean to share and replicate experiences, but also to strengthening and promoting capacity development.

I reiterate to you, Mr. President, my country's support and recognition for your work in leading this Body. We expect that this substantive session can be translated into fruitful results and concrete recommendations to address the challenging environmental, social and economic realities of our time.

I thank you.