



U. S. AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

MAR 25 2005

Mr. Neil Jeffrey
Executive Director
U.S. Office on Colombia
1630 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 201
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Jeffrey:

Thank you for your letter addressed to Mr. Natsios dated February 22, 2005, regarding your concerns with the U.S. delegation's statement following the recent G-24 Cartagena Conference on February 3-4, 2005. Let me reassure you that the issues discussed in your letter are extremely important to the United States Government.

The U.S. Government is highly supportive of both the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) and the implementation of its recommendations. Since 2000, the U.S. Government has provided over \$4 million dollars to the UNHCHR in Colombia to carry out its activities.

The U.S. Government shares your view that the Cartagena Conference was a good opportunity to reaffirm international support, and we will continue to stress the importance of civil society's role in shaping the future of Colombia and the importance of facilitating dialogue between civil society and Colombian authorities. This is already being pursued through several avenues, including USAID's democracy program, which emphasizes outreach and capacity building with a number of civil society organizations in Colombia.

Regarding the establishment of a legal framework for truth, justice and reparations, Administrator Natsios' comments in Cartagena urged the G-24 to support efforts by the Colombian Government to pass legislation that will effectively dismantle paramilitary groups and hold their members accountable for criminal acts, while at the same time recognizing that international assistance for the demobilization and reintegration effort will be essential.

The U.S. Government has invested heavily in strengthening democratic institutions, promoting human rights and the rule of law, addressing humanitarian needs, and working to end the threats posed to Colombia's democracy by narcotics trafficking and terrorism. The U.S. Government shares your commitment to Colombia and plans to continue its support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Hogan" followed by a stylized initial "E.H.".

Elizabeth Hogan
Director
Office of South America Affairs
Bureau for Latin America and
the Caribbean