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1. Background

On September 4, 2012, President Santos announced the signing of a General Agreement for Termination of the Conflict between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, setting in motion the fourth official peace talks with this group. The initial agenda includes: 1) rural development, 2) guarantee of functional political opposition and civic participation, 3) end of conflict (laying down arms and reintegration into civilian life); 4) drug trafficking; and 5) rights of victims. Preparatory talks started in Oslo on October 17, 2012 and substantive negotiation s, in Havana, on November 19, 2012.

2. Key Developments from March 5 to March 11

Hugo Chávez succumbs to cancer

On Tuesday March 5, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez passed away after a nearly two-year battle with cancer. Santos stated that the best tribute to the deceased leader would be an end to the conflict.¹ Former Vice President and now interim President until elections are held in mid-April, Nicolás Maduro, says that Chávez gave him guidance on how to handle the peace process.²

Next round begins, time pressure mounts

As the seventh round of talks began on March 11 in Havana, negotiators seemed optimistic that agrarian reforms will be consolidated. Both sides are aware of time limitations.³ Senate President Roy Barreras has urged the negotiators to sign a peace agreement by July 2013 to give Congress sufficient time to legislate prior to congressional elections in March 2014.⁴

Santos nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

Among 259 nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize, President Santos has been nominated for having brought the FARC to the negotiating table.⁵

ELN frees two German hostages

On Friday March 8, the ELN released two German brothers Uwe and Gunther Breuer, kidnapped in November 2012. The German government expressed gratitude to President Santos and the ICRC, who facilitated the release, for their support.⁶

¹ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/muerte-de-hugo-chavez-reacciones-de-presidente-hugo-chavez_12642723-4

² http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz-como-afecta-muerte-de-hugo-chavez_12644743-4

³ http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-409465-gobierno-y-farc-reanudaran-dialogos-de-paz-fase-optimista

⁴ http://patria05.servername.com/nacional/congreso-urge-gobierno-y-las-farc-firmar-la-paz-27904

⁵ http://infosurhoy.com/cocoon/saii/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/saii/newsbriefs/2013/03/06/newsbrief-04

⁶ http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-409167-alemania-expresa-alivio-liberacion-de-ciudadanos-secuestrados-el



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3. Negotiations & Agenda

GOC warns FARC of limits on immunity

The Attorney General, Eduardo Montealegre, reiterated that the temporary lifting of arrest warrants for FARC negotiators only applies to a specific geographic area, and that they could be detained if found elsewhere. The area itself was not specified, but the announcement came as FARC negotiators contemplated traveling to Venezuela for Chávez's funeral.⁷

Movement on the second agenda item: FARC political participation

Santos clarified that the recent congressional visit to Havana, led by Senate President Roy Barreras, was organized in response to FARC's request for information on the legislative timeframes relevant to enabling FARC members to seek office as early as 2014.8

4. International Context

Financial ratings improve

Fitch ratings agency upgraded Colombia's outlook to positive (Standard & Poor's did so in August 2012) due to its strong economy, security advances, and favorable debt dynamics. The annual economic growth rate loses an estimated 2 percentage points due to the conflict.⁹

OAS Chief of Mission of Support to the Peace Process in Colombia resigns

OAS Mission of Support to the Peace Process (MAPP-OEA) Chief in Colombia, Marcelo Álvarez, resigned after four year in the position.¹⁰

5. Other Voices

Artists and intellectuals support the peace process

Over 100 Colombian writers, journalists, academics, politicians and artists signed an open letter emphasizing their support of the peace process and the proposed march on April 9 in Bogotá. 11

http://www.laopinion.com.co/noticias/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=415375&Itemid=1

http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/L/las farc entrarian en politica en 2014/las farc entrarian en politica en 2014/las

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http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/06/colombia-ratings-fitch-idUSL1N0BYFCV20130306
http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/sale-marcelo-lvarez-de-la-misin-de-la-oea-en-colombia_12657222-4
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http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/carta-ms-de-100-intelectuales-y-artistas-respaldan-proceso-de-paz_12641402-4



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Around 750 artists and poets from the international community have also begun to organize a world poetry event on May 9 – 21 in support of the process. 12

Truth Commission requested by National Crimes of State Victims' Movement

MOVICE, the National Crimes of State Victims' Movement, published a letter to the UN requesting a truth commission to recognize all victims of the armed conflict and investigate all cases. They stated, "the government should recognize the existence of a State policy that has facilitated violations of human rights, crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes."¹³

Governor of Antioquia: Five reasons to work towards peace

Sergio Fajardo, Governor of Antioquia, set out five driving objectives of the peace process:

- 1) Diminish homicides, injuries, terror and fear: victimization will decrease
- 2) Break the cycle of violence that has become a customary way to resolve conflicts: peace becomes engendered in society
- 3) The state arrives in rural areas and creates conditions apt for agricultural development: rural development progresses more rapidly
- 4) The State increases efforts to combat criminal groups and corruption
- 5) All resources that are now channeled to conflict are reassigned to education¹⁴

6. Emerging Challenges and Responses

Manual eradication statistics down

Manual eradication of coca has been declining since 2008, when the number of hectares peaked at 96,000. The reduction in 2012 to 30,000 hectares coincides with a lowered budget, but also reflects the greater dispersion of coca plots, rendering eradication more difficult and costly. 15

Casualties

Two soldiers were killed and two children (4 and 11 years old) injured when an improvised explosive device detonated in San Andrés de Cuerquía in the northwest of Colombia. FARC is believed to be behind the attack.¹⁶

¹² http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1184351&Itemid=1

http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/articulo-408759-proponen-comision-de-verdad

¹⁴http://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/actualidad/las-cinco-razones-de-sergio-fajardo-para-lograr-un-acuerdo-de-paz-con-lasfarc/20130304/nota/1852329.aspx

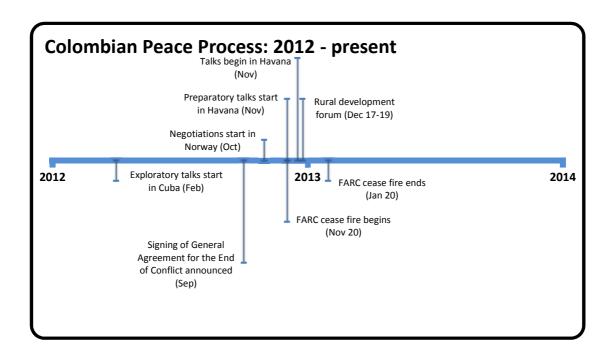
http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/cayo-erradicacion-manual-de-coca_12671641-4

 $[\]overline{\frac{}}{\text{http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130311/blast-kills-2-soldiers-injures-2-children-colombia}}$



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7. Timeline



8. Further Reading

FARC's evolution: the past 10 years

Corporación Arco Iris will release the report "From Caguán to Havana" next Thursday. The report discusses changes in FARC's organization and geographic presence over the last ten years. The Director of Arco Iris, León Valencia, highlighted that FARC was never defeated and their military actions increased substantially in the first half of 2012.¹⁷

Iván Márquez on political aspirations

Lead FARC negotiator Iván Márquez expressed his desire to openly and legally enter politics. He is currently involved in the development of the Clandestine Communist Party and the Bolivarian Movement for a New Colombia (also clandestine according to Márquez).¹⁸

¹⁷ http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/las-farc-nunca-estuvieron-derrotadas-leon-valencia/335836-3

¹⁸ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz-participacin-poltica-de-farc-un-gran-desafo_12671624-4



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1. Background

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2. Key Developments from March 12 to March 19

"Dialogues will end within months": Santos

In a recent statement, President Santos said that progress is being made toward concrete commitments by both sides, and that if the current pace continues, the dialogues will end within months. He also stated that any agreement made in Havana will have to be approved by popular referendum in Colombia.¹⁹

'Peasant Reserve Zones' incite debate

The FARC have proposed 9.5 million hectares of 'Peasant Reserve Zones' which would be politically autonomous and facilitate land restitution to small-scale farmers. Opposition from both the Santos government and Uribe supporters said that although they agree that peasant farmers should receive additional support, it should not come in the form of "little independent republics". They believe that the 'Peasant Reserve Zones' are an attempt by the FARC to create spaces over which they can maintain territorial control. ²⁰

Context note: 'Peasant Reserve Zones' or 'ZRCs' were created through Law 160 of 1994 to protect small-scale farmers from land seizure, and facilitate land restitution processes.

Recent trip to Havana by Congress members provokes Congressional outcry

A visit to Havana by six Congress people earlier in March provoked outcry from other members of Congress who were unaware of the trip. They raised concerns that the visit could conflict with the interests of the Peace Commission, which is the only entity authorized to represent Congress in

¹⁹ http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-410184-santos-dice-dialogos-de-paz-concluirian-meses

http://www.elespectador.com/print/410197 and http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/foro-reflexiona-sobre-proceso-de-paz_12686052-4 and http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-411242-farc-aspiran-multiplicar-zonas-de-reserva-campesina-colombia



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the negotiations. Those who went to Havana clarified that they were invited by the GOC, and they did not intend to override the authority of the Peace Commission.²¹

3. Negotiations & Agenda

Ministers are enemies of peace: FARC

The FARC claimed that the Defense and Agriculture Ministers are seeking to create military strongholds in rural communities, and that the ministers favor the "foreignization" of Colombia. The FARC said that they are therefore enemies of peace.²²

Approval of the peace agreement will be challenging

The Ex-Minister of Justice, Rafael Nieto, articulated widespread concern over the challenge of gaining popular approval for the peace agreement. He said that the government is concerned that the constituent assembly option supported by the FARC would allow opposition leaders to veto the agreement. However, the alternative - popular referendum - may result in a popular vote against the agreement as a rejection of the guerrillas.²³

"I don't believe that weapons are the best path": Tanja Nijmeijer

Tanja Nijmeijer, a Dutch woman who joined the FARC in 2002 and is in their extended negotiating group, stated in an interview that weapons are a last resort to combat injustice. She discussed her hope that the process will bring peace to the countryside, and the difficulties of being a woman in the FARC.²⁴

16 soldiers dead in combat: FARC seeks ceasefire

After taking responsibility for the deaths of 16 soldiers in a violent exchange in the Cauca region on March 5th, Iván Márquez expressed the FARC's desire for a peaceful backdrop to current negotiations. He requested that the government participate in a bilateral ceasefire in order to stop hostilities and facilitate peace.²⁵

FARC deny involvement in drug trafficking

²¹ http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/comision-paz-fin-celos/336507-

http://www.elespect<u>ador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-410465-farc-dicen-ministros-de-defensa-y-agricultura-son-enemigos-de-pa</u>

²³http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/R/refrendar acuerdo de paz sera otra prueba de fuego/refrendar acuerdo de paz sera otra prueba de fuego.asp

http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-409953-no-creo-armas-sean-el-mejor-camino

http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-411180-farc-lamentan-muerte-de-militares-e-insisten-cese-al-fuego



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The FARC denied links to drug trafficking after the Colombian military dismantled a cocaine laboratory and attributed its operation to this guerrilla group. The Attorney General's Office stated that drugs processed here were sold in the US in exchange for money and weapons.²⁶

4. Other Voices

Peasant organizations asked for direct participation at the negotiation table: FARC

The FARC declared that 50 peasant organizations had asked the group for direct participation in the negotiations. The FARC also invited delegates from Havana to participate in the forum on 'Peasant Reserve Zones' in San Vicente del Caguán on the 23rd and 24th of March.²⁷

Former President Samper criticizes the lack of environmental concern

Samper pointed out that it is unfortunate that the environmental and water resources that have been damaged in the conflict do not take a more central place in the negotiations.²⁸

5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

Government and NGOs confront each other in the ICHR

At a recent meeting in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, NGOs criticized Colombia's lack of progress in human rights. The GOC said that there is no possibility of impunity for the perpetrators of human rights violations, and that it is committed to bringing them to justice.²⁹

State police confiscate FARC counterfeit bills

The Popayán police confiscated US\$700,000 in counterfeit bills from the FARC after a civilian alerted local authorities about an abandoned suitcase.³⁰

6. Timeline

http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-410811-farc-rechazo-vinculacion-el-narcotrafico-colombia

²⁷ http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=5511

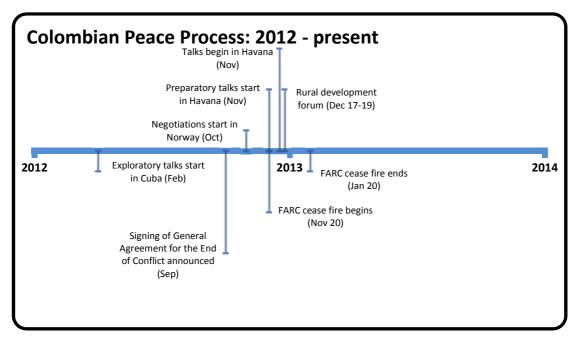
 $[\]frac{^{28}}{\text{http://www.rcnradio.com/noticias/samper-lamenta-que-en-la-habana-no-se-aborde-el-tema-medioambiental-54723\#ixzz2Nd39fOox}$

http://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/estados-unidos/gobierno-y-ong-en-debate-sobre-fuiero-militar 12687222-4

http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/articulo-409872-confiscan-700-mil-dolares-falsos-farc



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7. Further Reading

FARC propose eight points to support ethnic minorities

The proposal outlines the need for better defined land and territorial rights for Indigenous, Afrodescendant, raizal, and palenquera communities, and increased guarantees of political, economic, cultural, and environmental autonomy. Also included in the document are constitutional inclusion and state financing of interethnic and intercultural territories.³¹

FARC: Ten minimum guidelines for the increased dignity of work in the countryside.

Given the high levels of inequality and poverty in the countryside, the FARC has proposed the following guidelines for increased dignity and improved work and life conditions in rural areas.

- 1. Universal and unconditional minimum salary.
- 2. Access to land and means of production.
- 3. Protection of rural work, large-scale generation of employment and improvement of income.
- 4. Formalization of salaried work.
- 5. Access to health insurance and pension systems.
- 6. Provision of conditions necessary to basic welfare.
- 7. Training and education.
- 8. Special programs for women and young workers.

³¹ http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=5508



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- 9. Promotion and stimulus of cooperative production systems based on solidarity and associated values.
- 10. Stimulus of union organization and special protection for unions and agrarian organizations.³²

Clara López: Presidential candidate and Santos critic

The Polo Democrático's new (and only current) candidate for the 2014 presidential elections, Clara López, gave an extensive interview with El Espectador in which she criticized Santos for tying the peace process to reelection. She also described her party's support of the peace process and plans to facilitate political participation from many sectors of society.³³

http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=5513

http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/articulo-410870-clara-lopez-no-hay-coincidencias-el-centro-democratico



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2. Key Developments from March 20 to March 27

Close of 7th round: Government recognizes progress, wants more prompt agreements

The seventh round of talks ended on March 21, and the GOC stated that although disagreements remain, the two sides of the negotiating table have come together on some points and progress has been made. The GOC hopes that agreements will be reached more promptly in the eighth round of talks, set to begin on April 2.³⁴

Congress requests revival of FARC political party

Members of Congress requested that the Unión Patriótica, the FARC's 1985 political party, be revived in order to facilitate the armed group's political participation, serving also as a measure of collective reparations to this group, which saw some 4,000 of its members and sympathizers killed in the 80s. Other paths to political participation of the FARC include a collation with other left-leaning politicians or through the Marcha Patriótica, an existing movement with strong links to the FARC.

National meeting held on Peasant Reserve Zones (ZRC)

Some 3,000 small scale farmers were in attendance at a national meeting on ZRCs in San Vicente del Caguán on March 22 and 23. The National Association of ZRCs claimed that ZRCs represent an "ideal mechanism to start solving agrarian and land issues," and presented its proposals for the negotiating table, which include establishing ZRCs on some 10 million hectares. Strong disagreements remain as to the degree of autonomy to be afforded these zones.³⁸

³⁴ http://www.cmi.com.co/?n=101907

³⁵ http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/articulo-411316-congreso-piden-revivir-up-partido-politico-de-farc

³⁶ http://www.elmundo.com/portal/noticias/justicia/revivir_la_up_seria_un_error.php

http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/la-locura-carcel-barranguilla/337665-3

http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-412200-campesinos-reunidos-el-caguan-ponen-comun-sus-propuestas-paz; http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-412225-farc-insisten-desmilitalizar-reservas-campesinas-colombianas



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3. Negotiations & Agenda

GOC and FARC request forum on political participation

In a collaborative document released on March 21 (the final day of the seventh day of talks) the GOC and the FARC requested that the United Nations and the Universidad Nacional organize a forum to discuss the FARC's political participation and address civil society proposals on the matter.³⁹

Regional roundtables with victims

The Congressional Peace Commissions, with support from the United Nations, will conduct nine regional workshops with victims of the armed conflict. As planned currently, the first session will be held on April 18th in Chocó, and then in each of the other eight regions every week until the final session in mid-June.⁴⁰

Recent defeats of the FARC in Caquetá

Military operations in Caquetá were successful in destroying two guerilla camps in the area, as well as taking in two guerrilla members who voluntarily demobilized during the operations.⁴¹

ELN: "Count on us" for peace

Nicolás Rodriguez Bautista, high commander of the ELN, stated recently that the armed group is willing to enter a peace process if the government is prepared to resolve the historical causes of the conflict: poverty, inequality, and lack of regional political participation.⁴²

4. International Context

UN asks Colombia to avoid amnesties

A UN report presented by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, states that the GOC should avoid amnesty and other forms of impunity that infringe on human rights. The report also highlighted the "false positives" and other cases of state-perpetrated homicide which are not, for the most part, brought to justice. ⁴³

The HCHR Representative in Colombia, Todd Howland, urged the FARC to recognize their victims, and emphasized the importance of using transitional justice mechanisms to process cases of

³⁹ http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-411777-gobierno-y-farc-solicitan-organizar-foro-sobre-participacion-pol

http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-411575-mesas-de-paz-del-congreso-tambien-sesionaran-el-extranjero and http://www.elusyersal.com.co/cartagena/nacional/comisiones-de-paz-preparan-recorridos-nacionales-113060

⁴¹ http://hsbnoticias.com/vernoticia.asp?ac=Nuevos-golpes-al-bloque-sur-de-las-Farc-en-Caqueta&WPLACA=39965

⁴² http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-412337-si-paz-cuenten-el-eln

⁴³ http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/onu-pide-evitar-amnistias-en-el-proceso-de-paz-colombiano 12703682-4



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human rights violations.⁴⁴ The UN has highlighted the need to balance justice and FARC political participation, saying that victims should be the protagonists of discussion and agreements.⁴⁵

5. Emerging Challenges and Responses

A guerrilla demobilizes every 7 hours

Government figures demonstrate that almost 1,000 guerrilla members demobilized last year under government programs. The Minister of Defense, Juan Carlos Pinzón, attributed this rate to targeted military operations in areas previously controlled by guerrillas. Over the last two years, of 1,800 guerrilla members who have demobilized (or in the case of minors, disengaged): 82% were from the FARC, 24% were women, and 17% were under 18 years of age. 46

Constituent assembly not an option for peace process approval

Minister of the Interior Fernando Carrillo has confirmed that the only two methods by which a possible peace agreement will be approved are legal referendum and popular consultation. He stated that as there will be no changes to the Constitution, the constituent assembly option supported by the FARC does not apply.⁴⁷

Extortion a growing problem

While statistics seem to show some forms of violence in Colombia decreasing, extortion is an increasing threat to the security of citizens at all socioeconomic levels of society. Extortion is on the rise among organized criminal groups as well as non-organized criminal actors, and presents a growing challenge to state armed forces. 48

6. Timeline

http://hsbnoticias.com/vernoticia.asp?ac=Delegado-de-la-ONU-pide-a-FARC-reconocer-violaciones-a-D-H-&WPLACA=39963

⁴⁵http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/O/onu pidio equilibrio entre justicia y participacion politica de farc/onu pi dio equilibrio entre justicia y participacion politica de farc.asp

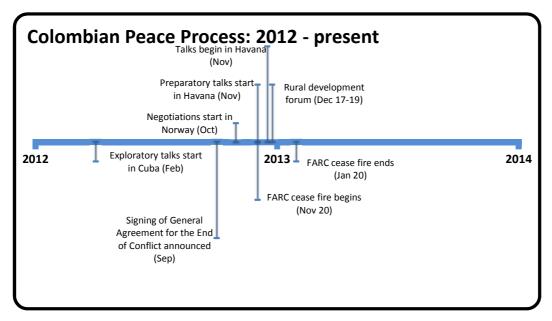
⁴⁶http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/articulo-411541-cada-7-horas-un-guerrillero-abandona-armas

⁴⁷ http://www.eluniversal.com.co/cartagena/nacional/referendo-o-consulta-propuestas-del-gobierno-para-acuerdos-de-paz-105238

http://www.eltiempo.com/opinion/editoriales/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW NOTA INTERIOR-12709740.html



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7. Further Reading

State crimes should be part of the dialogue: Pérez Esquivel

Nobel Peace Prize Winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel declared in a radio interview that the GOC is guilty of crimes and large-scale human rights violations as part of the armed conflict, and should therefore be brought to justice as part of the peace process.⁴⁹

Life in the Peasant Reserve Zones

Occupants of the 'ZRCs' or peasant reserve zones interpret the law that allowed the creation of these areas to require the GOC to fund development projects approved by community leaders in the ZRCs. They see the ZRCs as a solution to community issues such as a current lack of health services and inadequate electricity.⁵⁰

FARC: Six minimum guidelines for education, science, and technology

The FARC made a proposal including six minimum guidelines for education, science, and technology that included incentives for: 1) free universal education at the primary and secondary levels; 2) technical and technological training for youth; 3) scientific and technological research; 4) socio-economic research and rural census programs; 5) community participation in research and practice; and 6) protection and strengthening of traditional knowledge.⁵¹

⁴⁹ http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/articulo-411924-crimenes-de-estado-deben-estar-mesa-de-paz-perez-esquivel

http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/asi-se-vive-en-una-zona-de-reserva-campesina-_12709476-4

⁵¹ http://pazfarc-ep.blogspot.com/2013/03/comunicado-delegacion-farc-ep-seis-propuestas-educacion-ciencia-tecnologia-transformacion-democratica-del-campo.html