



Foreign Affairs Committee

Committee Office House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From the Chair

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

5 February 2019

Dear Foreign Secretary,

As you may be aware, the Foreign Affairs Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into Global Britain and South America. I write in connection with the question of land reform, a subject which was raised during our evidence session on 29 January.

Land reform is an essential element of the Peace Accord, the document which provides Colombia with an essential roadmap to peace and stability following years of conflict which is being implemented with significant international support, including from the UK. However, the process of redistribution has been extremely slow, leaving communities vulnerable.

The slow progress has created a number of side effects, namely encouraging migration to urban areas, which in turn exacerbates poverty. This also feeds illegal economic activities which undo UK support to develop the Colombian economy, such as through the Prosperity Fund.

I would be grateful if you could outline the steps being taken by the UK to facilitate the speedy restitution of land and the declaration of land titles within Colombia as part of the Peace Accord. I would also be interested to learn what steps the UK is taking to ensure the campesino and indigenous communities are afforded assistance when unsuccessful in reclaiming their land.

I note the significant financial contribution to stabilisation efforts in Colombia through the CSSF's Security and Access to Justice for Peace programme, administered through the FCO.

We will be placing this letter and your response in the public domain.

TOM TUGENDHAT MP
Chair



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Minister of State for
Europe and the Americas

19 February 2019

Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee
Committee Office, House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 5 February. I welcome the continuing interest of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Colombian peace process and agree that the underlying causes of conflict, including land, must be addressed in order to ensure sustainable peace. I am replying as the Minister of State responsible for Colombia.

The issue of land is central to Colombia's armed conflict. We are pleased that the first chapter of the Peace Agreement is dedicated to rural development, and that the Colombian Government has taken steps to implement its commitments. However, we know that dealing with this historical issue is difficult and will take time and sustained effort by the Colombian Government and international partners.

The UK provides support to Colombia through programme funding, and is assessing the possibilities for further extending this support. Firstly, through the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund and the Human Rights Fund, we are helping the Colombian state create safe conditions for people to return to their land. The continuing threats and killings of human rights defenders are linked, in part, to land restitution: we are supporting both the state and civil society to protect those at risk. Secondly, we are assisting the Colombian Government to kick-start rural development. The UK has been instrumental in helping the Agency for Territorial Renovation complete the consultation phase of four of the rural development programmes, PDETS, outlined in the peace agreement. Thirdly, we are exploring how our International Climate Fund might support land registry and titling in conflict areas to support peace and reduce deforestation.

RT HON SIR ALAN DUNCAN MP