

**MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA,
H.E. ÁLVARO URIBE VÉLEZ,
TO THE SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE
CONVENED BY THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL**

22 September 2009

In Colombia, the level of carbon emission for each point of GDP is far below the Latin-American average, which at the same time is far below the world average.

Over 51% of Colombia's territory is rainforest, with a great predominance of the Amazon Rainforest. We are making all efforts, and we are willing to make all the efforts to effectively contribute in this fight of humanity against climate change. In our country, 10% of the territory is today designated as protected area.

We are implementing a program in order to protect our rainforest from the threat posed by drugs. Illicit crops had caused the destruction of two million hectares in Colombia. We have advanced with the Forest Ranger Families Program, monitored by the United Nations. Ninety thousand rural Colombian families committed themselves to abandon illicit drugs, maintain the areas free of illicit drugs and watch over the recovery of the forest. The Government of Colombia pays approximately two thousand dollars per family a year. The oversight is carried out by the United Nations.

In the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta —the highest mountain range, the greatest height close to the seacoast, a system of great importance—, we have advanced in a vast recovery process through drug crops elimination, as well as building native towns at the base of the Sierra, so that these communities will be able to regain the environmental control of the area.

Colombia is advancing significantly in the field of biological fuels, in alternative sources of energy. We have created all the incentives. For example, we produce currently a million liters per day of alcohol fuel from sugarcane. We are reaching a production of a million-eight thousand liters per day of biodiesel from African palm. We are also testing other energy sources. Two important points: in Colombia biofuels do not affect the rainforest and we have sufficient land so that they do not compete with food security.

In Bogotá, we are finalizing a hundred and four kilometers massive public transportation system, an initiative that is also being implemented in other nine Colombian cities.

We reiterate to the world today our decision to contribute to the fight against climate change.