

DRAFT

United Nations Peacebuilding Commission

Ambassadorial Level Meeting on Peacebuilding in Guatemala

4 June 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Concept Note

Context

On 15 January 2024, His Excellency Bernardo Arévalo was inaugurated as President of Guatemala following a contentious electoral process marred by attempts to undermine the election results. The mobilization of citizens, especially indigenous peoples and civil society organizations, was decisive in ensuring that democracy prevailed. Almost 30 years after the signing of the peace accords in 1996, the country is at a crossroads, with the consolidation of peace and the achievements of democratization under threat. Previous administrations have caused serious setbacks to the independence of the judiciary, rule of law, and the fight against impunity. President Arévalo is pushing forward an ambitious reform agenda to fight corruption, improve public service delivery and increase inclusiveness in political and policy-making processes.

The Government's program aims to reverse the erosion of democratic institutions, build consensus on key national priorities through dialogue, and empowerment of historically marginalized actors. Indigenous peoples, comprising nearly half of the population, face significant challenges, including rising levels of poverty, low representation in decision-making, and a long history of exclusion. Indigenous women, in particular, face aggravated forms of discrimination and violence. According to UNDP's National Human Development Report 2022, there is a 20% gap in the Human Development Index between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

To address these disparities, the government has instituted dialogue with a national platform of indigenous authorities to discuss work agendas aimed at accelerating development. Additionally, the government has prioritized structured dialogues with various groups, including peasant organizations and the private sector. The Government's work program includes the convening of four "national pacts" focusing on education, health, the environment, and development. These pacts intend to facilitate a qualitative leap in the country's development and better prepare it to face future challenges. The support of the international community will continue to be important in advancing this agenda for change.

Guatemala also faces significant challenges in women's rights and empowerment, including high levels of violence against women, alarming maternal mortality rates, early pregnancies, and restricted access to justice, particularly among Indigenous and rural women. Women currently constitute only 20 percent of legislators. The new administration has demonstrated a commitment to gender equality by striving for gender parity in the cabinet, positioning Guatemala among the region's leaders in representation. The Vice President's role as head of

Guatemala's Delegation to the Commission on the Status of Women further demonstrates the government's commitment to women's empowerment.

H.E. President Arévalo has expressed his commitment to multilateralism and his interest in working with the United Nations and the international community. Upon assuming office, the new Foreign Minister extended the mandate of OHCHR in Guatemala for a period of three years. The Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund have historically supported core national peacebuilding priorities, including transitional justice, human rights, conflict prevention and dialogue. Assistant Secretary-General Spehar conducted a visit to Guatemala in May, where she held meetings with the President, and representatives of women and civil society organizations to identify opportunities for further collaboration around national priorities.

Objectives of the meeting

The meeting will provide H.E. President Arévalo with an opportunity to present his Administration's peacebuilding priorities, explore potential partnerships with the Peacebuilding Commission and mobilize international support for the government's transformative reform agenda.

It is envisaged that the meeting will facilitate stronger collaboration between the Commission and the country, leveraging the PBC's advisory and bridging roles in support to national peacebuilding priorities.

Agenda

- Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Sergio França Danese, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
- Statement by H.E. Bernardo Arévalo, President of the Republic of Guatemala
- Briefing by Ms. Feliciana Herrera, Indigenous Mayor of Nebaj, El Quiché
- Remarks by Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, ASG for Peacebuilding Support
- Interventions from the floor
- Closing remarks by the Chair