

negotiated settlement to the conflict and an end to kidnapping, assassinations of civilians, and other abuses of international humanitarian law through a humanitarian accord. Along with the United Nations Secretary General's Special Advisor on Colombia, the Commission at times played an important role in keeping the two sides at the table. Canada has appealed to all actors to respect the civilian population, however we now have no direct contact with the FARC, which lost its political status when the peace process ended. The Facilitation Commission now has no formal role, although members continue to share information and views on the Colombia situation.

In addition to the Facilitation Commission, Canada is also a member of the larger, 26-country Support Group for the Peace Process in Colombia, which has met three times: in Bogota (October 2000); Madrid (July 2000); and Brussels (April 2001).

In 2001, Canada offered its assistance in the peace process with the ELN (National Liberation Army). Along with Germany, Sweden, Japan and Portugal, we were asked in February 2001 to participate in international verification of a proposed ELN demilitarized zone. Specifically the job of the participating countries would be to verify the withdrawal of the armed forces and police from the zone while peace talks were underway, and verify that the zone was not being used illegally by any of the armed groups. Peace talks collapsed in August 2001 due to lack of agreement on a demilitarized or "encounter" zone but resumed later in the year. They were ultimately cancelled by former President Pastrana in June 2002 .

The election of President Alvaro Uribe Velez on May 26, 2002, marks an important turning point in the Colombia conflict. Uribe's intention is to increase defence spending, double the size of the army's combat force and National Police, and return to the negotiating table only when the FARC agree to work towards a cease fire and end terrorist activities. His ultimate goal is to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the guerrilla groups – possibly with international mediation under the auspices of the UN. Canada has offered to participate in any future peace process, and we would strongly support a formal UN role in the talks.

President Uribe has stated that his government will continue to support the work of the UN Secretary General's Special Advisor on Colombia. Canada is also supporting the Special Advisor through DFAIT's Human Security Program (\$200,000 in 2001-2003). Canada continues to work with other international organizations to support the Government of Colombia. For example, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), we have provided \$5.2 million in humanitarian assistance over the past two years. This includes, for 2001-02, \$1 million to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to assist Colombian refugees in Panama, Venezuela and Ecuador, \$2 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross for its emergency appeal, and nearly \$900,000 to the Canadian Red Cross for mobile health clinics. In 2002, CIDA is