



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Miguel Solano
Dialogue for Peace Initiatives
Swarthmore College
500 College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081

Phone: +1 (205) 529-0266
+1 (610) 690-4800

E-mail: msolano1@swarthmore.edu

PRESS RELEASE

'DIALOGUE FOR PEACE INITIATIVES: COLOMBIA' – SYMPOSIUM ON COLOMBIA'S ARMED CONFLICT TO BE HELD THE DAYS 18 AND 19 MARCH 2005 AT SWARTHMORE COLLEGE, IN PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES.

Swarthmore, PA – 8 February 2005 – Swarthmore College, one of the most prestigious schools in the United States, will host 'Dialogue for Peace Initiatives: Colombia', an international peace symposium on Colombia's armed conflict the days 18 and 19 March 2005, in Pennsylvania, United States.

The event is being hosted by Dialogue for Peace Initiatives (DPI), a non-partisan, neutral student and faculty organisation at Swarthmore College founded in 2002 and dedicated to promote initiatives that foster dialogue, analysis and peaceful resolution of conflicts around the world.

In September 2003, DPI organized 'Dialogues for Peace Initiatives: Kashmir', an international symposium focused on the Indo-Pakistani conflict in the region of Kashmir. The event was the largest symposium ever held in the United States on the conflict, and proved to be a milestone for the increasing efforts of the South Asian diaspora towards peace in the region.

This year, DPI will host the event 'Dialogues for Peace Initiatives: Colombia', which will be focused on the situation in Colombia.

DPI decided to sponsor the symposium 'Dialogue for Peace Initiatives: Colombia' due to the lack of visibility of the Colombian conflict in the United States. Despite the fact that the country endures the longest and most urgent human rights crisis in the Americas, there is a lack of interest and scholarship by the public and the academia. In response, DPI looks to call upon academics and non-governmental organizations to participate in the event.

The two-day symposium will have two panels: 'Colombia 1948-2005; Conflict and Negotiation' and 'Reconciliation, Negotiation and Perspectives for Peace'. In the first panel, panellists and participants will discuss and analyse the lessons learnt from failed previous peace initiatives during the last 50 years, and identify the reasons and challenges that led to and identify. In the second panel, panellists will debate and propose different scenarios for peace, as well as the challenges that the country faces in the future.

In the months leading up to the symposium, DPI has held a series of events at Swarthmore College intended to raise awareness of the conflict amongst the student body: a Colombian film cycle, a faculty panel with professors, amongst others.

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Swarthmore College
500 College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081 USA



Web: <http://dpi.swarthmore.edu>
E-mail: dpi@swarthmore.edu
Phone: +1 (610) 690-4800
+1 (610) 328-5702

For the symposium 'Dialogue for Peace Initiatives: Colombia', DPI has invited to Swarthmore some of the most prominent and influential protagonists from all the political spectrum of the country: Dr Carlos Franco, director of the Colombian presidency's programme on human rights and official envoy of Vice-president Francisco Santos; members of parliament and majority leaders Antonio Navarro Wolff, Armando Benedetti and Lorenzo Almendra –who is also leader of the Indigenous Authorities Union of Colombia–; Ms Salud Hernandez-Mora, one of the most influential journalists of the country; ex-security advisor and analyst Dr Alfredo Rangel, Dr Daniel García-Peña, ex-government's High Commissioner for Peace; Prof Daniel Pécaut, director of Institute de Hautes Etudes Sociales in Paris; Mr Gabriel Marcella, Professor at the US Army War College and security advisor on Latin American policy to the US government; and Mr Adam Isaacson, director of the Centre for International Policy at Washington DC.

Other invited panellists that are still to fully confirm their assistance are HE Jorge Visbal Martelo, Ambassador of Colombia in Canada and Dr Luis Carlos Restrepo, current High Commissioner for Peace of the Colombian government.

In addition, in attendance will be Gerson Andres Florez, Colombian (19), and the youngest Nobel Peace prize nominee ever, who has a prominent career on peace initiatives and reconciliation.

The symposium is being sponsored by Swarthmore College and the William J. Cooper foundation. Figures like Noam Chomsky and Gabriel Garcia Marquez have expressed their support for the project.

'Dialogues for Peace Initiatives: Colombia' will be one of the largest symposiums ever held in the United States on the Colombian conflict, and one of the most important peace conferences ever held outside Colombia.

The event is free and by invitation only. Attendance is limited. If you are interested in attending, please request an invitation package to Karen Minyety at kminyety1@swarthmore.edu.

You visit our website on the symposium at <http://dpi.swarthmore.edu/colombia>

For additional information and press details, please refer to the contact information below:

Para detalles de prensa (en inglés)

Nombre del contacto: Tom Krattenmaker

Correo electrónico: tkratten1@swarthmore.edu

Dirección:
Office of News and Information
Swarthmore College
500 College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081

Teléfono:
+1 (610) 328-8534
Fax:
+1 (690) 690-5702 (Att: Tom Krattenmaker)

Para otras solicitudes

Nombre del contacto: Miguel Solano

Correo electrónico: msolano1@swarthmore.edu

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