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*Représentation permanente de la Belgique auprès des Nations Unies et auprès des institutions spécialisées à Genève*

**WG UPR 44 – Colombia**

***Intervention of Belgium***

7 November 2023

President,

We congratulate the Colombian government with the progress it has already made towards its *Paz Total*, especially with regards to the advancements in its transitional justice processes.

The execution of the Peace Agreement should remain Colombia’s priority. My country therefore recommends Colombia to:

**R1.** Take the necessary preventive measures to counter the phenomenon of the use and recruitment of children by the various armed groups, and set the age of 18 years as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces.

According to Belgium, progress can also be made in Colombia in the following areas:

**R2.** Improve the model of prevention and protection for human rights defenders, including women rights defenders, indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders and journalists and ensure that thorough investigations are held for crimes committed against them, and that perpetrators are held accountable.

**R3.** Intensify efforts to strengthen the judicial mechanisms to combat impunity related to gender-based violence, while ensuring that victims have access to justice, medical and psychosocial services, shelters, and comprehensive reparation measures.

Thank you, president.