

Speech of H.E. Mr. Ignacio Enrique Ruiz Perea

National Day of Colombia - 20th July, 2023

Distinguished Guests,

Today marks exactly 40 days since four children were found, who were lost for 40 days in the vastness of the jungle in Colombia. They were found alive and safe. You heard it in the news worldwide. Four indigenous children from the Uitoto tribe, siblings, 13, 9, 4 and barely one year old. They had survived a plane crash in which their mother died. I call it "the Miracle of the Jungle": that impregnable, dark Amazonian jungle, full of wild animals, insects, insanitary conditions, with permanent rain, but also the jungle that was in charge of protecting them and giving them the life they needed. It is the life, it is the jungle: two mainstays of what is the current policy of President Petro's government: Colombia, World Power of Life, and Colombia, seeking to preserve the environment, the Amazon, the lungs of the world, and fighting against climate change.

On the 5th of May, the Colombian Congress approved the National Development Plan called "Colombia, Power of Life" where, in the words of president Petro, "environmental justice and social justice are the two great pillars so that Colombia can be a power of life", and it will give the country a new global and regional position, with a foreign policy oriented and structured around peace, and a cooperation with the American region and the European Union, among other similar regions of the world, that will be strengthened.

We are glad to know that Colombia will be the Protempore President of CELAC in 2025, and we celebrate the success in recent EU-CELAC summit in Brussels.

This is the reason why it is very gratifying to report the progress in the recent high-level meeting called "Road to the Amazon Summit" held in Leticia, on the border with Brazil and organized by the Colombian government. After that, the European Commission announced

the so called "Amazon Plus" program, within the framework of the "Global Gateway" strategy of the European Union, which will work hand in hand with the Amazonian countries.

But before all these projects the peace project for Colombia stands first, the so-called "Total Peace" that has been the guiding principle of the current government. This peace project has found support in the UN Security Council, in the Organization of American States and in the European Parliament, which has expressed its support for the ceasefire agreement between the national government and the ELN on the 21st of June. For this reason, the preservation of life and the Amazonian jungle are priorities of a country like Colombia, a country that has lived a long time with the stigma and prejudice generated by past events that still can be experienced. We don't want more names like Pablo Escobar, Mancuso or Tirofijo. We want more Shakira, more Carlos Vives, more Fernando Botero, more Egan Bernal, more scientists like Patarroyo or Llinás. Thus, we want more names like Gabriel García Márquez, whose work "One Hundred Years of Solitude" celebrates 56 years of being published, as one of the most widely read books in the history of literature.

Hungary and the Republic of Colombia have opted for a sincere, pragmatic relationship, which is reflected in the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations that are celebrated this year: a relationship that has been strengthened with the reopening of the two embassies - in 2017 and 2018 - and with a continuous work in the fields of education, agriculture, commerce and culture, sectors where we have identified strengths and needs on both sides. We keep working on it every day, thanks to the excellent team of the Directorate of the Department of Latin America and the Caribbean, today headed by Ambassador Lóránd Endreffy, former head of mission in Bogotá for several years. I take this opportunity today to bid farewell to him and wish the best luck on his next diplomatic assignment.

Finally, with the constant support of my wife María and my children Nico and Cami, with the excellent teamwork of this Embassy, the flawless support of the Honorary Consul Katalin

Nagy, I wish to share with all of you this important occasion to celebrate the 213th anniversary of the independence of Colombia, inviting you to enjoy Colombian music and to taste some of our gastronomy.

Thank you very much for your presence.