

**Colombian government, FARC rebels conclude another peace talks round; no deal on land issues.**

By Andrea Rodriguez

The Associated Press

Colombia's government and largest guerrilla army closed another round of peace talks Thursday without reaching a much-anticipated deal on agrarian reform, the first of six agenda points for negotiations taking place in Havana. Lead government negotiator Humberto de la Calle said his team and its counterparts from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, will recess as planned and resume negotiations April 2. He expressed optimism that the two sides will be able to wrap up land discussions swiftly and move on to the second item on the agenda.

"The conversations are advancing about as could be expected," de la Calle said. Expectations had been high that an initial agreement was imminent on land issues, which were the root cause of Colombia's five-decade armed conflict.

"There can be no turning back. We continue to forge ahead always, advancing slowly if one wants to think so, but also persistently," said FARC commander Ivan Marquez, whose legal name is Luciano Marin Arango. "Of course we still must resolve opposing points of view."

Marquez said at least five areas of disagreement remain on agrarian matters: rules limiting the size of agricultural holdings; foreign ownership of prime farmland; limits on the extent of cattle ranching; the widespread cultivation for products used for energy purposes rather than food; and mining. Marquez predicted those differences can be ironed out in "the coming exchanges."

Assuming an accord is struck on land, five more points must be resolved for a peace deal: political participation, drug trafficking, an end to hostilities, reparations for victims and a plan for putting the agreement into effect. The FARC and representatives of Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos have been carrying out the peace talks in the Cuban capital since late 2012.

Santos has said he hopes the talks yield a concrete outcome by November. De la Calle said Thursday that the conversations will not include any topics that are not on the pre-agreed agenda. The FARC has proposed adding to the table things like a demilitarization of the countryside, levying taxes on mineral energy companies and the renegotiation of Colombia's foreign debt.

De la Calle said those are not up for discussion.

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