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on Race,  
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LATIN AMERICA  
WORKING GROUP  
EDUCATION FUND

CEADA  
COMITÉ DE CONSULTORES  
DE COLOMBIA, AMÉRICA  
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### **The U.S. Should Strengthen the IEANPE and Formulate a Strategy for the Implementation of the Ethnic Chapter**

As U.S. civil society organizations that monitor issues related to the rights of Afro-descendant and Indigenous populations in Colombia, we welcome the Pact for the Implementation of the Ethnic Chapter of the 2016 peace agreement signed by various government agencies, led by the Vice Presidency, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Unit for the Implementation of the Final Peace Agreement on behalf of the Colombian government on November 20, 2023. It is important to us that the Pact reiterates much of what is already contained in the principles established by the Ethnic Chapter and highlights the important role of the international community in ensuring its implementation.

It is important to reiterate that the Special High-Level Body on Ethnic Peoples (*Instancia Especial de Alto Nivel con Pueblos Étnicos*, IEANPE) is fundamental in guaranteeing the effective implementation of the Ethnic Chapter. Democratically staffed by representatives of the ethnic communities who rotate periodically, the role of the IEANPE is to ensure that all actors involved in the peace agreements are in line with the interests of the ethnic communities. They ensure that the national, regional, and local levels of the organizational entities of ethnic peoples and communities are consulted and their recommendations integrated. For this to be effective, training and communication about the strategies decided for the fulfillment of the Ethnic Chapter is required at all levels of ethnic leadership.

The international community, and the U.S. government in particular as the companion to the Ethnic Chapter, should do more to ensure that the IEANPE is strengthened and has the financial and political resources to enable it to act quickly and effectively. The U.S. should ensure that the IEANPE is integrated into the technical teams responsible for aspects of the Ethnic Chapter's work so that the rights of ethnic communities can be reflected in policies and programs.

It is of utmost importance to recognize that the progress of the Ethnic Chapter has been built with the IEANPE and representatives from Afro-Colombian and Indigenous civil society. To ensure that the U.S. accompaniment bears the best fruits, we reiterate the need for the U.S. government, IEANPE, and leaders of the ethnic communities to formulate a joint strategy for its implementation. This strategy should be comprehensive, taking into account the different support tools available to the U.S. government in its relationship with Colombia.

**December 20, 2023**