



**Ambassadorial-Level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission
on the Great Lakes Region**

GUILLERMO FERNÁNDEZ DE SOTO
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

New York, June 11th, 2020

- I would like to thank all the briefers for their comments regarding the efforts to ensure coherent and coordinated support to the Great Lakes regions.
- I also recognize Ambassador Blanchard, Chair of the PBC, for the efforts that he and his team have made in order to keep the PBC working and meeting during these times.
- His leadership has been outstanding allowing the PBC to fulfill the goals set at the beginning of the year.
- For Colombia, the COVID-19 is not only a public health emergency, it also has impacts on the world's economy, affecting the most vulnerable.
- The response to the pandemic must be guided by solidarity, inclusion, and human rights.
- The challenges faced by the Great Lakes region amidst the pandemic are similar to those we face in my own country.
- One of the six pillars of the UN GLRSF is related to the cross-border mobility, which addresses the migrants and returnees support.
- As that region, we face the challenge the vulnerable Venezuelan migrants that have fled their country in recent years. We have



received more than 1.8 million.

- This migration has inevitably permeated the state's institutional capacity to respond, particularly, during the pandemic.
- Since the beginning of the health emergency, the National Government engaged in close coordination with donor countries, United Nations agencies, other international organizations and local authorities to articulate their efforts in this new context. .
- Regarding the socio-economic recovery from these unprecedented times, we need to reach a global consensus with international financial institutions to increase resources to alleviate the payment of debt of emerging countries and contribute to their development. The role of the Development Bank will be essential.
- I would like to conclude indicating that this is a time for multilateral cooperation and international solidarity towards two goals: humanitarian attention and economic recovery.

Many thanks