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**UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY**

Office of Communications
53-70, Jingumae 5-chome
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-8925
Japan

Tel.: +81-3-5467-1212
Fax: +81-3-3499-2828
E-mail: media@unu.edu
Website: <http://www.unu.edu/>

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**UN University to Host Lecture on “Shared Responsibility”
by the Vice President of the Republic of Colombia
H.E. Francisco Santos**

Event: Coffee with the Vice President of the Republic of Colombia, H.E. Francisco Santos
Theme: “Shared Responsibility” (for dealing with the environmental problem caused by illicit drugs)
Date/Time: 28 October 2008 (Tuesday), 10:00 AM – noon
Venue: Elizabeth Rose Conference Hall (5F), United Nations University Headquarters, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
Organizers: United Nations University (UNU); Inter-American Development Bank, Office in Japan; Embassy of the Republic of Colombia

- On 28 October, the United Nations University will host a “Coffee with the Vice President of the Republic of Colombia, H.E. Francisco Santos”. This event will feature a lecture by the Vice President on “Shared Responsibility”, an anti-drug initiative that has been led by the Government of Colombia since 2005.
- Vice President Santos is an active promoter of the Shared Responsibility initiative, which aims at getting cocaine-producing and -consuming countries to work together to find solutions to the global threat (to families, public health, society, national security, and the environment) posed by cocaine production, trafficking and consumption. His talk will focus, in particular, on the negative impacts of illegal drugs such as cocaine on the environment.*
- In recent years, Vice President Santos has held a series of talks on the concept of Shared Responsibility around the world, with representatives from ministries, NPOs and NGOs, related governmental organizations, members of academia and the public.
- English and Japanese interpretation will be provided. For those unable to attend, the lecture will be webcast live at <http://c3.unu.edu/unuvideo/?206>.
- See <http://www.sharedresponsibility.gov.co> for more information about the shared responsibility initiative.

For more information or to reserve a media space at this event, please contact Naoko Yano, UNU Office of Communications (tel: 03-5467-1311; e-mail: media@unu.edu).

About Vice President Santos

Before being elected Vice President of Colombia in 2002, Francisco Santos Calderón worked for two decades as a journalist and editor for the influential *El Tiempo* newspaper. He studied in the USA at the University of Kansas and University of Texas, in the late 1980s taught journalism and US-Latin American relations at various Colombian universities. In 1990, he and several other journalists were kidnapped and held hostage for almost eight months by the Medellín drug cartel. Following his release, he spent some time at Harvard University as a Nieman Fellow, then returned to Bogotá and founded País Libre (Free Nation), an organization to assist the victims of kidnapping and their families. He is currently serving his second term as Colombia’s Vice President.

* *It is estimated that the illegal cultivation of coca, the plant from which cocaine is produced, is responsible for the destruction of at least 200 thousand hectares of tropical forest in Colombia each year (because of crop shifts to avoid detection). For each gram of cocaine produced, four square meters of forest are destroyed. Furthermore, the labs where the plant is turned into the drug pollute wide areas by releasing toxic chemicals into the water system.*