

COLOMBIA

Colombia is a republic in South America. Its capital is Bogotá and the total population is approximately 53 million. More than 1.8 million people fleeing from Venezuela are estimated to be in the country, which represents 3.4% of the total number of people in the country. In 2021, Colombia introduced an offer of a 10-year temporary protection status for Venezuelans who are in the country. Colombia also has over 9 million internally displaced persons, meaning people who are fleeing within the country. This is mainly due to internal conflicts with guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and the military.

Negotiation guidelines

During negotiations, Colombia's liberal laws on family reunification can be used to form a strong point of departure when negotiating with other countries. Discussions can be directed towards family reunification instead of subjects such as youth SRHR, where Colombia may face criticism. If Colombia receives criticism for its implementation of SRHR, you could argue that traditions, religion, and culture play a significant role in SRHR, and that the individual situation in each country must be considered when implementing SRHR. On the issue of family reunification, collaboration with the EU can be advantageous because of similar positions. In negotiations on youth SRHR, Colombia holds similar positions to Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Lebanon.

Family reunification

In Colombia, those who have been granted refugee

status can apply for family reunification for their spouse, partner, and children. Colombia considers it important to take the best interests of the child into account in this matter, regardless of the child's nationality or country of origin. The state has procedures for family tracing, restoring contact, maintaining contact, and reunification. Colombia has also signed the resolution "Rights of the Child: Realizing the Rights of the Child and Family Reunification," which emphasizes the importance of all unaccompanied children and children separated from their parents having access to a family reunification process. The resolution expresses deep concern that millions of children worldwide are forced to grow up without parents and thus confirms the need to address the root causes of family separation, with a strong emphasis on showing support for all children and their families through appropriate and necessary protection.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Colombia does not consider sexual and reproductive health for young people to be a priority, despite statistics showing that many girls and women who give birth are below 19 years of age. Likewise, sexual education for children who are refugees should not be a priority. Contraceptives and sexual education should mainly be available to married couples. Colombia considers it more important to prioritize adequate protection, food, and education for children on the move and for unaccompanied and separated children to be reunited with their parents. Parents should then decide what their children need to know about SRHR. According to Colombia, abortions should only be allowed if the pregnancy risks harming the woman's mental or physical health, if it is a non-viable pregnancy, or when the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest. Performing an abortion solely because the woman wishes to is prohibited. Colombia believes that the same laws should be applied to children on the move. It has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual violence, which is something you may bring up in negotiations, but there is concern regarding how well the policy has been implemented.

The right to complain to the UN

Colombia has not ratified the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which allows children to complain if their rights are violated. Colombia has a standing invitation to the UN special rapporteurs and fulfils its obligations with regard to reporting to the UN convention committees. Colombia therefore holds a positive view on establishing a special rapporteur for children whose rights have been violated.

