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President of Colombia Addresses US Conference of Mayors 77th Annual Meeting

(Providence, Rhode Island)-- On Friday, June 12, the President of Colombia Álvaro Uribe Vélez, addressed close to 200 mayors during the United States Conference of Mayor's 77th Annual Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island.

"We are honored that President Uribe Vélez requested to address the mayors during our annual meeting," said Miami Mayor Manny Diaz. "Colombia has been an unwavering ally for the United States, and we appreciate the opportunity to discuss issues of importance for both countries with the President."

During his remarks, the President urged mayors of U.S. cities to coordinate actions with Colombia in the fight against drugs. President Uribe stressed that countries today must address with the drug problem at all levels, targeting both producers as well as consumers.

"Today, it is impossible to distinguish between countries that are drug consumers and those that are producers. Within the same country you face production, traffic, and consumption," stated President Uribe.

During his visit, President Uribe held a meeting with the mayors of Miami, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Providence, Dallas and Boston. "It was a very positive meeting. I want to thank Manny Diaz, the Mayor of Miami, as well as the other mayors, because we felt the mayors have a true interest and good disposition towards Colombia," the President stated.

The President also expressed some challenges: "In Colombia we are reforming the Constitution to drug consumption at all levels, because drug dealers in Colombia have used the law to achieve impunity. Today, if the Police find a dealer with a "minimum dose," he cannot be sent to jail. We cannot afford to continue this policy. While we continue to fight against drug production and trafficking, too many drug dealers are protected by the minimum dose law to remain free," emphasized the President.

Finally, President Uribe stated that the mayors understand the importance of the pending US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement to Colombia's continued drive towards economic growth and stability.

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