

## **Colombia will wait for trade agreement with US but refuses changes**

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Washington - The Colombian government is willing to wait for the approval of its Free Trade Agreement with the United States, but will not accept more changes to its contents, Colombian Trade Minister Luis Guillermo Plata said Tuesday in Washington.

'A delayed yes is better than a quick no,' Plata said.

He said Colombian representatives are not willing to introduce more changes to the text. The agreement already had to be revised this year, at the request of Democrats in the US Congress.

'We have done our share,' Plata said. 'I do not see what other changes we could make.'

The changes were confirmed by the Parliament in Bogota, after the Democrats called for the inclusion of labour and environmental clauses in negotiations from February to May.

He also referred to comments made last week by Senator Hillary Clinton, a Democrat who is the party's leading presidential candidate, against free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea.

Clinton said she was worried about the violence against labour leaders in Colombia. In response, Plata invited her to visit the Andean country.

Bogota and Washington ended negotiations on a free trade agreement in November 2006, but it is still pending ratification in the US Congress. Part of the Democratic Party thinks more effort is needed from Colombia on human rights and labour rights issues.