

Colombia Independence Day

Nations working together to deepen bilateral ties

Alejandro Posada
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF COLOMBIA

The celebration of the National Independence Day of the Republic of Colombia on July 20 is a valuable opportunity to celebrate the close relationship between Colombia and Japan. On behalf of President Juan Manuel Santos and the people of Colombia, I would like to express special greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the members of the Japanese government and the Japanese people, organizations and companies that, through their efforts, dynamically maintain strong ties with Colombia.

Colombia is experiencing a favorable environment and there is a wide array of opportunities for Japan in the fields of education, investment, trade, tourism and cooperation. Recently, and particularly in the last year, the Colombian government and the Colombian people have

joined efforts to build a stable, peaceful and welcoming country. Efforts have materialized into an increasingly positive situation for Colombia, with progress in the peace talks and significant improvements in national security. The "Final and Bilateral Ceasefire and End to Hostilities" agreement, which was signed between the government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) on June 23, marked a significant milestone in our history.

In the economic arena, Colombia is becoming more attractive for foreign investors thanks to peace-building efforts, economic development, and a growing list of signed free trade agreements. Hence, the country is expanding its presence in global markets and improving its business environment. Moreover, Colombia's privileged geographical position and its young, dynamic and well-educated population, of which 55 percent is under 30 years old, contribute to create a friendly environment for foreign partners. These advantages have led the tourism sector to become the second-most important generator of revenue in

the country, allowing for a constant growth of Japanese visitors.

Furthermore, Japan and Colombia are committed to continued negotiations on an economic partnership agreement. The partnership provides a framework that will enable greater diversification of traded products and services between Colombia and Japan. It's also important to note that, thanks to the policies taken by the government to improve the economic and social well-being of the Colombian people, it has recently been announced that Colombia is close to becoming a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The Asia Pacific Region is of high priority to Colombia and we are taking concrete steps to improve our presence in it. The Pacific Alliance, an integration mechanism between Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru, is one of the platforms through which Colombia is fortifying ties with Asia, and Japan is playing an important role as an observer to the process.

Currently, Japan and Colombia cooperate in projects

in areas such as agriculture, sustainable development, technical training and science and technology. As a result of our positive bilateral relations, last May, the Colombian minister of education paid an official visit to Japan with the intention of enhancing educational exchanges between both countries and promoting collaborative projects. This high-level visit provides evidence of the joint effort between the Japanese and the Colombian governments to diversify the bilateral agenda.

The commemoration of Independence is an excellent occasion to express the interest of the Colombian government to continue working together with Japan to invigorate the relations between both countries and to deepen the friendly and mutually beneficial ties that exist between both nations.

Please join The Embassy of Colombia in the Commemoration of the Independence Day with Colombian musicians and dancers at Shiba Park in Tokyo on Saturday, July 23, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Panoramic view of Bogotá, the capital and largest city in Colombia JULIAN SANTACRUZ

Shared outlook on politics, economy

Tatsumaro Terazawa
PRESIDENT, COLOMBIA-JAPAN
FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the Colombia - Japan Friendship Association, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations on the Independence Day of the Republic of Colombia.

Sharing the same political values of democracy and a dynamic and mutually benefiting economic relationship, the bonds between Japan and Colombia have been strengthening. National security in Colombia has seen a major improvement since the 20th century. In June, peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) marked an important milestone, signing a

ceasefire agreement to end five decades of armed conflict.

Since President Juan Manuel Santos' inauguration in 2010, Colombia has experienced steady economic growth of 4 percent per year, a positive development contributing to decreasing the unemployment and poverty rates. Similarly, with the cease-fire agreement, there is an expected additional 1.9 percent increase in the potential growth rate, pushing it to 5.9 percent.

I deeply hope for the continuous development of Colombia, as well as the enhancement of political, economic and cultural relations between our two countries.

Particularly, the visit of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Colombia in July 2014 was a breakthrough in diplomatic relations. I strongly believe the improvement in national security will promote a prompt agreement on an economic partnership agreement to increase trade and investment.

Many investment opportunities await

Yorihiko Kojima
CHAIR, JAPAN-COLOMBIA ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, KEIDANREN

On behalf of Keidanren's Japan-Colombia Economic Committee, I am delighted to extend my warmest congratulations to H.E. President Juan Manuel Santos and the people of the Republic of Colombia on their 206th anniversary of independence.

Recently the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas reached a cease-fire agreement, and the president said the peace talks are nearly complete. Learning this glad news I strongly believe now is the time to increase business in Colombia, which offers many incentives, including abundant natural resources such as coal and petroleum reserves, rich human resources and geographical advantages. Moreover, I understand the negotiations of the Japan-Colombia Economic Partnership Agreement are in their final stage and I urge both Japanese and Colombian companies to be prepared and not miss major opportunities.

The Japan-Colombia Economic Committee will continue to do its best to enhance the economic ties between our countries and contribute toward a mutually beneficial future.



Night view of Medellín, the second-largest city in the country PROCOLOMBIA



Cartagena, a port city on the northern coast of Colombia PROCOLOMBIA

Congratulations

to the People of the
Republic of Colombia
on the 206th Anniversary of
Their Independence



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