

Colombian president's visit

Colombia stands with the Land of the Rising Sun

Juan Manuel Santos Calderón
PRESIDENT, REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

On the occasion of my visit to Japan, I extend my greetings to Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial Family, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, the members of the government and the people of Japan.

Six months after the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, which so tragically affected the Japanese people, I want to express, on behalf of the people of Colombia, our solidarity and, above all, our admiration for the people of the Land of the Rising Sun, who proved their ability to cope effectively with adversity and, through teamwork and courage, to emerge stronger from such a disaster.

Colombia also recently suffered, for almost a year, a rainy season generated by a prolonged

La Niña, which affected millions of our countrymen and caused the worst natural disaster in our history. The example and the dignity of the Japanese people encouraged us to push forward and seek to build a better country than we had before.

I am honored to visit Japan and to be the first Latin American president who comes to this great country after the calamity of March. We come with a message of friendship and affection, with the firm intention of renewing our bonds of cooperation and increasing our trade.

It will also be the opportunity to greet and congratulate the new government of Prime Minister Noda, to whom we wish success and with whom we hope to have the best relationship.

Colombia, a democratic nation that today advances in its economic and social development, is determined to strengthen

and enhance its relationship with the Asia-Pacific region, and especially with Japan. To accomplish this goal, this year we established — with Mexico, Peru and Chile — a group called the Pacific Partnership in order to increase, together, our ties with this region of the world.

In the days of my visit to Japan I will hold an audience with His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito, and also meetings with the government, businessmen and investors, in order to further strengthen our relations in every sense: political, economic, social and cultural. We hope that once Japanese businessmen learn of the good moment Colombia is going through, they will be encouraged to invest in our country.

A very important part of the visit, therefore, will be the signing of the Agreement for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investment between



Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón

Colombia and Japan, ensuring a safe and predictable environment in which to conduct business between our countries.

Our nations seem distant on the map, but we can come

closer together to reach agreements that will help us improve the quality of life of our peoples. Thank you, Japan, for being a model of organization and moral strength to Colombia!

Brief overview of President Santos' accomplishments

Juan Manuel Santos Calderón was born on Aug. 10, 1951, in the capital Bogota.

He was a cadet at the Navy Academy in Cartagena. He studied economics and business administration, and carried out his graduate studies at the London School of Economics, Harvard University and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, in Massachusetts.

Santos has been chief of the Colombian Coffee Delegation to the International Coffee Organization (ICO) in London and was Colombia's first foreign trade minister as well as finance and national defense minister. During this last position, he was in charge of leading the implementation of the government's Democratic Security Policy.

In 1992, Santos was appointed president of the seventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, a position he held for four years. In 1999, he was the president of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. He has also served as the director of the Corporación Andina de Fomento, the development bank of Latin America.

He created the Fundación Buen Gobierno (Good Government Foundation) in 1994, hoping to improve the efficiency of the government. In 2005, he founded the political party Partido de la U, which is currently Colombia's largest political party.

Santos was a columnist and deputy director of his family-owned newspaper El Tiempo.

He was awarded the King of Spain Prize and was president of the Freedom of Expression Commission for the Inter American Press Association (IAPA).

He has published several books, among which the most significant are "La Tercera Vía" (The Third Way), written with former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and "Jaque al Terror" (Check on Terror), where he describes the most important actions against the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) terrorist group during his tenure as head of the Ministry of Defense.

On June 20, 2010, in the second round runoff of the presidential elections, after obtaining the largest percentage of votes during the first round of the presidential elections that took place on May 30, Santos was elected the 59th president of the Republic of Colombia for the four-year term from Aug. 7, 2010, to Aug. 7, 2014. President Santos obtained more than 9 million votes, the highest amount obtained by any candidate in the history of Colombian democracy.

During his campaign, he promised to lead a government of national unity that would carry out the transition from democratic security to democratic prosperity.

Santos is married to María Clemencia Rodríguez and is the father of three children.

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to His Excellency Juan Manuel Santos Calderón,
President of the Republic of Colombia,
on the Occasion of His Working Visit to Japan

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President's agenda

Since Sept. 11, President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón of the Republic of Colombia and his wife, María Clemencia Rodríguez, are in Japan on a working visit to further strengthen the friendly and cooperative relations with Japan.

The agenda includes an audience with Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and a meeting

with Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda.

During President Santos' visit, which ends Sept. 14, Japan and Colombia plan to sign the Bilateral Investment Agreement between Japan and Colombia, on which both sides reached substantial agreement on essential parts after the seventh round of negotiations from Dec. 13-17 in Washington, D.C.



Caribbean resort: Located on the northern coast of Colombia, Cartagena is a UNESCO World Heritage site and draws tourists from around the world. EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA

Facts about Colombia, relations with Japan

Colombia is located in northwestern South America and is bordered by Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Panama, the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

Colombia has the third largest population in Latin America and ranks in the top 30 in the world. The Colombian labor force is among the most skilled and competitive, with a cost 10 times lower than that of developed countries. More than half the population is under age 25.

The Republic of Colombia is a unitary, democratic, participatory and pluralistic state with separation of powers. Colombia has a president elected every four years. The National Congress has two legislative chambers.

Colombia has been part of

the United Nations since 1945 and is currently part of most of the organizations of the U.N. family. It has been a member of the Organization of American States since 1948 and of a wide range of subregional organizations, such as the Pacific Alliance (Peru, Mexico, Chile, Colombia), UNASUR, the Andean Community, the Meso-American Project, and the Association of Caribbean States, among others.

The current government's policy guidelines place relations with Asia and the Pacific in a priority position.

The National Development Plan 2010-2014 of President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, in the section referring to insertion and international relevance, CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Agriculture: Colombia is a leading producer of coffee in the world due to its suitable terrain and climate. EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA

Colombian president's visit /world



Street dances: The Barranquilla Carnival is one of Colombia's most important folklore celebrations, one of the biggest carnivals in the world and designated by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA

Strengthening ties with Japan

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recognizes the need to deepen international relations in Asia and the Pacific, applying the following criteria.

Colombia encourages political dialogue with other countries, and mechanisms of negotiation with Asia and the Pacific, increasing its presence in the region by high-level visits and participation in forums, and by receiving political and economic leaders from Asia and the Pacific.

At the same time, Colombia continues to increase its institutional presence with the opening of diplomatic missions and commercial offices. Colombia recognizes that the Asia-Pacific region is one of the most dynamic and promising in the world, with more than half of the world's population and one-third of its gross domestic product (GDP).

Colombia seeks to broaden and diversify trade with the world. In Asia and the Pacific it has important trading partners. Between 2008 and 2010, Colombia's exports to continental Asia rose from 4.8 percent to 10.2 percent of its total exports.

Colombia offers wide-ranging legal and logistic guarantees for investment. There is clear and transparent legislation on investment, a secure climate for Colombian and foreign businessmen, a high level of training in human resources, a modern platform for exports, and a privileged geographical location that facilitates air and sea transport.

Technological innovation is a priority to improve competitiveness and education. The Colombian government has given priority to new technologies' access, through international cooperation and the attraction of foreign investment.

Relations with Japan

In 1908, the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between Japan and Colombia was signed, which gave birth to the establishment of the bilateral diplomatic relationship.

In 1927, the first 158 Japanese emigrants, motivated by the paradisiacal images described in the novel "Maria," translated into Japanese by Yuzo Takeshima, traveled to Colombia to work as farmers. They were welcomed and settled in Colombia. The recent population of Japanese Colombians is estimated around 1,000 people, mostly living in the capital Bogota or in Barranquilla and Santiago de Cali.



Modern city: Located 2,600 meters above sea level, the capital Bogota is home to many international firms. EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA

As time went by, in the last 30 years, academic, commercial and cultural relations have been strengthened through cooperation projects, technology transfers, education, enterprise development and assistance in diverse areas.

Colombian coffee, known around the world for its smoothness and aroma, has been for many years one of the most recognized products in Japan. For the last decade, Colombia has maintained its position as the second largest supplier of coffee to Japan.

Moreover, the variety of products that are exchanged between the two countries is growing. Colombia is recognized as the chief supplier of carnations to Japan and second in fresh flowers. And Colombian emeralds have conquered 90 percent of the Japanese market.

In 2008, commemorating the centennial of Japan-Colombia diplomatic relations, and at the strong initiative of the ambassadors of both nations, both governments decided to set up a group of "wise men" with the support of the Japan-Colombia Economic Committee of the Keidanren (Japan Business Federation).

The group, consisting of members from private, public and academic sectors of the two countries, has been studying the means for further strengthening of the bilateral economic relationship.

The recent high-level visits from Japan to Colombia include Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone's visit in November 2008 and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Hirotake Akamatsu's in May 2010.

From Colombia, in 2008, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism Luis Guillermo Plata visited Japan in April; Foreign Minister Fernando Araujo in July and Vice President Francisco Santos, who is a cousin of the current president, in October. They are followed by the visits of Minister of Finance Oscar Iran Zuluaga Escobay in November 2009; and five ministers in 2010: Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez (January), Minister of Defense Gabriel Silva Lujan (May), Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism Sergio Diaz-Granados (November).

For Colombia, which has often suffered from natural disasters such as floods caused by continual rain, the Japanese public and private sectors have provided emergency relief goods according to the request of the government of Colombia.

This year, in the aftermath of the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, President Santos visited the Embassy of Japan in Bogota on March 17 to pay his respects, sign the condolence book and express his sympathy and solidarity with the Japanese people. The government of Colombia extended its assistance to the affected people by offering emergency relief supplies, which were distributed in the Tohoku area, including Fukushima Prefecture.

Information provided by the Embassy of the Republic of Colombia.



Solidarity: Colombian Ambassador Patricia Cardenas visits Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, on April 15 to bring relief supplies, including food and water provided by the Republic of Colombia, to people affected by the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake. EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA