

# Colombia independence day

## Promising new opportunities

Roberto Velez  
AMBASSADOR OF COLOMBIA

The commemoration of 204 years of Colombian Independence on July 20 is an opportunity to extend special greetings on behalf of President Juan Manuel Santos and the people of Colombia to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government, organizations and companies related to Colombia, the people of Japan and the Colombian nationals residing in this nation.

On July 2, I had the honor to present credentials to His Majesty Emperor Akihito, as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Colombia in Japan, and with great commitment and dedication I will be devoted to continuing to consolidate the existing ties between both nations and to keep spreading relevant and updated information about our renewed country and the many possibilities it offers for investment, trade and tourism.

Given its strategic location, a population of more than 47

million where 55 percent is under the age of 30, a network of signed free trade agreements and a commitment to economic growth and prosperity for all, Colombia has remarkably expanded its presence in global markets and positioned itself as a reliable partner with an attractive business environment.

This achievement is also related to the successful efforts to further improve internal security and the continued commitment of the national government to keep building a nation of peace.

Colombia is also home to 14 percent of the biodiversity on the planet and has become an internationally recognized tourist destination with rich cultural diversity, varied landscapes and multiple experiences, for which it has gained the title of a country of "Magical Realism."

Japan and Colombia are currently at a very positive stage in their bilateral agenda.

Prime Minister Abe will be visiting Colombia later this month, which constitutes the very first visit of a Japanese prime minister to our country.

This will create an opportunity for a high-level dialogue that is hoped to give addition-

al momentum to the most relevant common issues.

Both countries are negotiating the Japan-Colombia Economic Partnership Agreement, a scheme that is expected to further boost the potential of the exchanges between the economies by achieving greater diversification of products and services. A new round of negotiations has just ended this week in Bogota, Colombia.

The Agreement for the Liberalization, Promotion and Protection of Investment, which was signed in September 2011 in the framework of the visit of President Juan Manuel Santos to Tokyo, is expected to be finalized as soon as the required constitutional procedures are completed in Colombia.

It is of our utmost interest to keep exploring with Japan additional ways in which we can diversify our ties and consolidate further connections in different areas such as culture and sports, education and cooperation.

On a more global perspective, Colombia has also maintained as a priority to create stronger bonds within the Asia Pacific region. One of the platforms to make this possible is the Pacific Alliance, a newly-minted economic bloc of which Colombia held the presidency

pro tempore until June this year.

The alliance aims to strengthen economic ties among Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru with the nations of the immense Pacific Basin. Japan is currently participating as an observer of this innovative and unified approach to Asia.

Another aspect worth mentioning in the international arena is the fact that Colombia has been invited to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and is currently advancing in the process of a potential acceptance, which will allow our country to exchange best practices and strategies for issuing more globalized policies in the future.

This commemoration of independence becomes, therefore, an occasion to express the interest of the government of Colombia to work toward flourishing ties with Japan that will bring mutual benefits for both nations.

Please join the Embassy of Colombia in the commemoration of Independence Day with Colombian musicians and dancers in Hibiya Park in Tokyo on July 20, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.



Located 2,600 meters above sea level, Bogotá is the largest city in Colombia and its excellent business environment makes it one of the most competitive cities in the region. PROEXPORT

## Companies attracted to resources, steady economic growth

Yorihiko Kojima  
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-COLOMBIA  
ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, KEIDANREN  
(JAPAN BUSINESS FEDERATION)

On behalf of the Keidanren's Japan-Colombia Economic Committee, I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations to H.E. President Juan Manuel Santos and the people of the Republic of Colombia on their 204th Anniversary of Independence.

Colombia has been an important friend to Japan over the years. Japanese companies have been attracted to Colombia not only for its rich resources, steady economic growth, stable fiscal policy and open-market policy on trade and investments, but also for its friendly and hardworking people. I am confident that under the strong leadership of Santos, Colombia will continue to enjoy strong economic growth and

remain a promising investment destination for Japan. I also have high hopes for the achievement of even more peaceful society through the efforts of the president.

Economic ties are growing stronger between our countries, and I look forward to our governments having made progress in this week's Japan-Colombia Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations in Bogota. This EPA will expand bilateral trade and investment and provide a gateway for Japan to access markets in the Pacific Alliance, one of the world's most highly-anticipated regional free trade areas.

The ninth Meeting of the Japan-Colombia Economic Committee will be held in Bogota on July 29. I am looking forward to visiting Colombia again and playing my small part to help enhance our economic ties.

In closing, please once again accept our heartfelt congratulations on this important day for the Republic of Colombia.



Cartagena's colonial walled city and fortress were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1984. The city is a member of the League of Historical Cities, which was launched in 1987 in Kyoto. PROEXPORT

## Strengthening political, cultural and economic relationships

Tatsumaro Terazawa  
PRESIDENT, COLOMBIA-JAPAN  
FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

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

Japan and Colombia have enjoyed a mutually complementary relationship in economic, as well as shared democratic, values in politics. Colombia is a very young country historically and demographically, it also has huge potential for economic development by utilizing various natural resources and high-quality human resources. Especially since the beginning of

this century, Colombia has achieved a dramatic improvement in security and continues to see strong economic growth.

I truly hope that Colombia will achieve further development under the long-term vision of President Juan Manuel Santos in his second term which begins on August 7, and strengthen more than ever its political, economic and cultural relationship with Japan. From this point of view, I am convinced that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit, which is scheduled for the end of July, will be an epoch-making event in the history of mutual exchange between high-level government officials of our two countries, and will also serve as a springboard towards early conclusion of economic partnership agreement negotiations to promote bilateral trade and investment.

## Japan and Colombia: A renovated partnership

Luis Genaro Muñoz  
CEO, COLOMBIAN COFFEE GROWERS  
FEDERATION; CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-  
COLOMBIA JOINT ECONOMIC  
COMMITTEE

Japan is going through a phase of renewed confidence in its economy and its important role in the international arena. The Japanese government led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, has inspired a sense of optimism in the Japanese people, and "Abenomics" has yielded significant results. Fortunately, we will welcome Abe to our country in the coming days.

Colombia's solid fundamen-

tals allowed the economy to have the highest growth in the region in the first quarter of 2014 (6.4 percent) and enjoy low inflation and unemployment.

Colombian and Japanese entrepreneurs must persist in deepening the relations between our countries. The economic partnership agreement is an appropriate vehicle for this purpose, and we hope that the negotiation of this important instrument concludes soon.

On July 29, we will celebrate in Bogotá, the ninth meeting of the Japan-Colombia Joint Economic Committee where the upcoming business agenda will be structured, and where the conquest of the Japanese market by our coffee, hopefully serves as an example for more products from our nation.

Our business models in Japan have evolved with a market that constantly reinvents itself. Through initiatives with partners in Japan, today our coffee is not only used in the leading products in the market, but the use of our brands generates greater value added for our coffee growers.

I am sure that business leaders on both sides of the Pacific will soon consolidate effective alliances and develop new initiatives in line with the potential of the relationship between our countries.



The Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia is on the UNESCO World Heritage list for its centennial tradition of growing coffee on small plots in the high forest and the way farmers have adapted cultivation to difficult mountain conditions. CARLOS HOYOS, PROEXPORT

## Congratulations

to the People of the  
Republic of Colombia  
on the 204th Anniversary of  
Their Independence



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