

Colombia independence day

Promising new opportunities

Roberto Velez
AMBASSADOR OF COLOMBIA

The commemoration of 205 years of Colombia's Independence on July 20 is a suitable opportunity to celebrate the friendly relations 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 all the Japanese people, organizations and companies that have established ties with Colombia.



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During this time, I have been committed to sharing the possibilities Colombia offers Japanese companies in the fields of investment, trade and tourism. At present Colombia is in a very positive and stable situation. The national government's proactive efforts in peace dialogues and toward the establishment of long-lasting national security are doubtless key contributors of this success. Additionally, in recent years, Colombia has remarkably expanded its presence in global markets and has positioned itself as a reliable partner with an attractive business environment. The peace-building efforts of the national government and Colombia's privileged geographical position and a young, dynamic population — 55 percent is under 30 years old — significantly contribute to the

possibilities Colombia offers foreign partners.

The significant increase in the number of high-level exchanges between Colombia and Japan shows both countries are at a very positive stage in their bilateral agenda. The Colombian Minister of Defense Juan Carlos Pinzon visited Japan to promote cooperation in the fields of defense, security and disaster prevention. Additionally, the Minister of Finance and Public Credit Mauricio Cardenas Came met key members of the Japanese financial sector during his visit to Japan, as did the President of the Colombian Trade promotion Agency, ProColombia, Maria Claudia Lacouture. Similarly, with the objective of strengthening cooperation between both countries, the Vice Minister for Communications and Information Technology Maria Isabel Mejia also came to Japan. Recently, the Japanese Parliamentary Vice Minister of For-

ign Affairs Takashi Uto held a meeting with the Colombian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Patti Londono. All of these high-level visits have had a positive impact on the diversification of the agenda, where new areas of cooperation between Colombia and Japan have been added.

In the commercial arena, the Agreement for the Liberalization, Promotion and Protection of Investment, which protects and encourages foreign investment, has passed its legal course and will be implemented shortly. Moreover, Japan and Colombia are committed to the negotiations on an economic partnership agreement (EPA), as the 12th round of negotiations just ended last week in Bogota. The partnership provides a framework that is expected to positively impact commerce by enabling a greater diversification of traded products and services between Colombia and Japan.



Located 2,600 meters above sea level, Bogota is the largest city in Colombia. Its excellent business environment makes it one of the most competitive cities in the region. © PROCOLOMBIA

Maintaining strong bonds with the Asia-Pacific region has remained one of Colombia's priorities; the Pacific Alliance being one of the

platforms in which Colombia, together with Chile, Mexico and Peru is proactively strengthening its ties with Asia. The members of the Pacific Al-

liance are honored to count Japan among its observers.

This commemoration of independence is an occasion to express the interest of the

Colombian government to continue working together with Japan, to develop flourishing ties that are mutually beneficial.

Growing investment, trade between nations

Yorihiko Kojima
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-COLOMBIA
ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, KEIDANREN

On behalf of the Japan-Colombia Economic Committee of Keidanren, I am delighted to extend my warmest congratulations to H.E. President Juan Manuel Santos and the people of the Republic of Colombia on the 205th anniversary of independence.



Under the strong leadership of Santos, Colombia is achieving steady economic growth.

With a population of 47 million, Colombia embraces a potential growing consumer market and the establishment of the Pacific Alliance, which aims at free trade among neighboring countries, is making it more attractive. Along these lines, I highly anticipate the conclusion of the Japan-Colombia Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The EPA not only expands trade and investment between the two nations, but also helps promote future economic integration encompassing all of Asia and the Pacific.

Let me wish the Republic of Colombia and its people peace and prosperity on the 205th



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

anniversary of their independence. The Japan-Colombia Economic Committee will continue to do its best to en-

hance the economic ties between our countries and contribute toward a mutually beneficial future.

Colombian coffee: An outstanding product

Santiago Pardo
DIRECTOR-ASIA, COLOMBIAN COFFEE
GROWERS FEDERATION

Colombian coffee is 100 percent mild-washed Arabica, thus making Colombia the biggest producer of high-quality coffee in the world. The reputation of our coffee is not limited to the coffee species we grow in



Colombia or to its post-harvesting processes. What makes our coffee unique in the world are the environmental conditions of Colombia, as well as the quality control and support systems that have been designed by Colombian coffee growers who make sure Colombian coffee always meets the quality demanded by consumers around the world.

Colombian coffee is also the result of the hard work of over 563,000 small coffee families.

They have organized themselves through the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation (FNC) and have a collective commitment to quality. This commitment is just one reason why Colombian coffee, or Cafe de Colombia, is protected with a Denomination of Origin, a certification mark or Protected Geographical Indication in several countries.

Parallel to the rise in coffee production, Colombian coffee exports to Japan have significantly increased over the past years (averaging 1.1 million bags annually). Today, Japan is not only one of the largest importers of coffee in the world, but also a very dynamic coffee market that offers a wide range of coffee products to consumers. Furthermore, Japan is the main market for specialty coffee produced in Colombia, as well as the most important market in terms of value for the FNC.

The FNC, after more than five decades in Tokyo, has developed a strong relationship with

all members of the coffee industry in Japan. This relationship has helped us carry out programs to improve the life of Colombian coffee growers, as well

to create new coffee concepts and coffee products for the Japanese market, allowing the consumers to enjoy the great quality of Colombian coffee.



The Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its centennial tradition of growing coffee in high forests under difficult mountain conditions. © PROCOLOMBIA

Strengthening political, cultural and economic relationship

Tatsmaro Terazawa
PRESIDENT OF 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 with dynamic and mutually benefiting economic relations, the relationship between Japan and Colombia has been strengthening in recent years.

Colombia's national security has been improving significantly in the 21st century. The peace negotiation process between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

(FARC), along with the common agreement to collaborate on demining projects, are evidence of the country's achievement in the field of security.

Similarly, since President Juan Manuel Santos was elected in 2010, Colombia is experiencing high economic growth, at a rate of more than 4 percent annually, a positive development that contributes to decreasing the unemployment and poverty rates. I deeply hope for the continuous development of Colombia as well as for the political, economic and cultural relations between the two countries to continue strengthening.

Particularly, the visit of the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Colombia last July marked a milestone in the diplomatic relations of Japan and Colombia. I strongly believe that this visit will promote the prompt conclusion of an economic partnership agreement: A bilateral friendship to promote commerce and investments.

Congratulations

to the People of the
Republic of Colombia
on the 205th Anniversary
of Their Independence

We support the Colombian coffee industry through our coffee concern.

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