



# Investment Opportunities in Colombia



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Ambassador of Republic of Colombia to Japan

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Ambassador of Colombia to Japan. From 2013 to 2016 I was the Ambassador of Colombia to the World Trade Organization following my 5 years appointment as Vice-Minister of Commerce. I received the offer of coming to Japan, when I was still at the WTO. Given Japan's importance in the international arena and its great role in the multilateral system, I felt compelled to accept the challenge. I feel greatly honored to have the opportunity to represent my country, and to contribute to strengthen the relation between Colombia and Japan.

One of my top of priorities as Ambassador of Colombia to Japan is to help bridge the misconception gap between the lingering images of a past Colombia, and the thriving current Colombia. For this reason, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few aspects relevant for those who are exploring trade and

investment opportunities in Colombia. First, it is important to mention that Colombia and Japan are now in the final stage of negotiations of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), a robust legal framework that will increase trade and investment opportunities adding greater dynamism and diversification to our current economic relation. Moreover, this agreement will contribute to the already solid, rich and friendly Japan-Colombia diplomatic relation, established under the shared values of democracy, peace building and the respect for the rule of law.

Without hesitation, I can say that the most significant feature of Colombia's economy is its long history of economic stability characterized by a sound fiscal policy, constant economic growth and outstanding macroeconomic management. Conditions that place Colombia as the third country in Latin



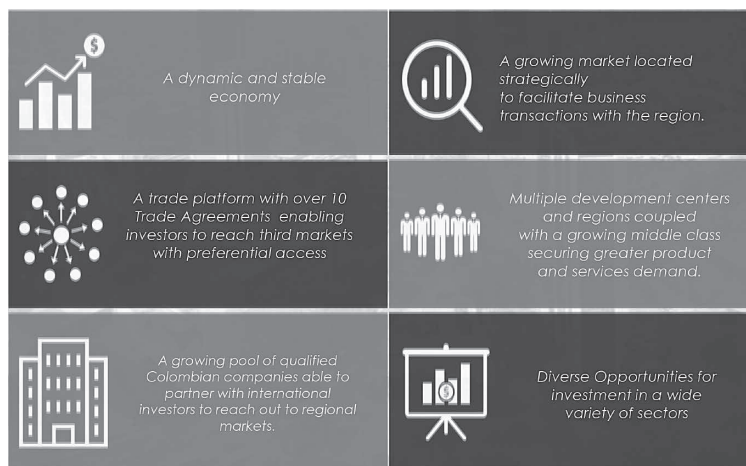
Panoramic view of Bogotá, credits Procolombia

America in terms of ease for doing business and the best in protection to foreign investors according to the World Bank Doing Business Assessment. Additionally, Colombia was ranked as one of the markets with fastest growth perspectives in Latin America for 2016, while the average in the region is expected to be negative according to the World Economic Outlook Report, issued by the International Monetary Fund in October 2016.

Colombia's recent performance in FDI reception is also noteworthy. During the first semester of 2016 there was an increase of more than 16% in comparison to the same period last year. This explains why, Colombia has been included in UNCTAD's list of the 25 countries with most FDI reception, and is now a candidate to be member of the OECD. This FDI inflow has been directed primarily to the manufacture, infrastructure, service and tourism sectors.

Highly qualified human resources is another of Colombia's strengths; 55% of the country's population is under 30 years old. Japanese companies investing in Colombia are already benefiting from this competitive advantage hiring Colombia's dynamic, well-educated and skilled young people. A good example of this is the investment by Castem Co. earlier this year. Castem Co, one of the first Japanese SMEs to invest in Colombia, was motivated to establish business in our county because of its highly qualified workforce. Moreover, the country is now recognized as a strategic logistic hub, offering great connectivity to the North American, South American and Caribbean markets due to Colombia's location in the center of the Americas and with coasts on both the Atlantic and

## What Colombia Offers



Pacific oceans.

The current government, under the leadership of President Juan Santos, has taken important steps towards the establishment of a long-lasting peace. Recently, these efforts have been recognized by the international community, with the decision to award him the Nobel Peace Prize. During the last 4 years, the government has been committed to a peace negotiation process with the FARC guerilla group. It reflects not only the government's willingness, but also the strength of Colombia's institutions that allow a clear democratic participation where our citizens decide together the future of the country. After the plebiscite celebrated on October 2nd, the government has expressed its willingness to maintain a dialogue with all the political parties, organizations and groups, so that together, we can continue building an all-inclusive and uniting peace for the country.

Let this be the chance to express our gratitude to the international community for its support during all these years and for its constant commitment throughout the process.

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