

Embassy of India, Bogota, Colombia

Brief on India-Colombia Bilateral Relations

The resident Indian mission in Bogotá was established in February 1973. The Mission was closed in January 1993, but reopened in October 1994, as Colombia was to host the 11th NAM Summit. 2009 marked 50 years of diplomatic relations between India and Colombia. India has an Honorary Consulate in the city of Barranquilla.

Political Relations: India and Colombia have friendly and cordial bilateral relations. Both countries have considerable coincidence of views on global issues and have closely collaborated in various multilateral fora.

Important Bilateral Visits:

From India:

The following high level visits have taken place from India to Colombia:

1. Visit of Late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1968.
2. Late Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao visited to participate in the XI NAM Summit in October 1995
3. Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, MOS (EA) in September, 2004
4. Shri Shashi Tharoor, MOS visited in January 18-20, 2010
5. Prof. Saugata Roy, MOS for Urban Development in 2010
6. Shri Dinsha Patel, MOS for Mines in May 2011
7. Shri Vivek Katju, Secretary (West) in July, 2011(FOC)
8. Dr. Rahul Khullar, Commerce Secretary in Aug. /Sept. 2011
9. Shri Sachin Pilot, MOS (C &IT) in April, 2012
10. Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia MOS (C&I) in June, 2012
11. Shri Parvez Dewan, Secretary (Tourism) in October, 2014
12. Shri R. Swaminathan, Special Secretary (AMS&CPV) in November, 2014
(Last FOC with Colombia)
13. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, MOS (IC)(P&NG) in May 2015.

From Colombia:

1. Foreign Minister of Colombia, Dr Rodrigo Pardo Garcia-Pena, April 1997 for the NAM Ministerial Meeting.
2. President Andres Pastrana Arango, March 2001 for the **first state visit from Colombia.**
3. Foreign Minister Carolina Barco Isakon in February 2003.
4. Vice Minister Camilo Reyes visited New Delhi in May 2004.
5. Defence Minister, Mr. Juan Manuel Santos, in November 2007.
6. Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Mr. Luis Guillermo Plata in April 2008.
7. Minister of Energy and Mines, Mr Hernan Martinez Torres in 2008.

8. General Fernando Soler Torre, Deputy Chief of Colombian Air Force attended the Aero India in February 2009.
9. Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Ambassador Clemencia Forero Ucros in April, 2009.
10. Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez accompanied by Commerce, Industry and Tourism Minister in November 2009.
11. Vice President Francisco Santos in April 2010.
12. Vice Foreign Minister Monica Lanzetta in November 2011
13. Vice Foreign Minister Patti Londono in March 2012.
14. Vice Minister of Business Development, Carlos de Hart on 11-12 February, 2013.
15. Mr. Diego Molano, Minister of Information Technology (IT) of Colombia in August 2013.

Bilateral Treaties and Agreements: Following is the list of agreements which have been signed with Colombia earlier:

(Economic & Commercial)

- Trade Agreement, 1970
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Information Technology, 2002.
- MoU on Hydrocarbons, 2008.
- Bilateral Investment Promotion & Protection Agreement (BIPPA) signed in November, 2009. The agreement entered into force from July 2012.
- MoU for cooperation in the IT sector between National Association of Industries of Colombia (ANDI) and NASSCOM, 2009.
- MoU on Business Development Cooperation, 2010.
- Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, 2011. It has entered into law wef. 7 July, 2014.
- MOU for cooperation in IT Sector between NASSCOM and FEDESOFIT in May 2013.

(Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) & Foreign Ministry)

- MoU on Annual Foreign Office Consultations, 1995
- Agreement for non-requirement of Visas for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders, 2001.
- Agreement for facilitation of Visas to Businessmen, 2001.
- Agreement for Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies, 2001.
- Agreement between India and Colombia on free exercise of gainful occupation for dependent family members of the diplomatic, consular and administrative personnel of diplomatic missions, 2016.

(Other Ministries)

- MoU on Cooperation in Science & Technology, 2005.
- MoU on Cooperation in Urban Development, 2007.
- MoU on Defence Cooperation, 2009.

- MoU on Cooperation in the Bamboo sector, 2009.
- Agreement for Cooperation in Health, 2010.
- MoU for Cooperation in the field of Geology and Mineral Reforms, 2011.
- MoU on Sports, 2014.
- Cultural Agreement 1974
- Cultural Exchange Programme for 2012-2016 (expiry in December 2016)

Commercial and Economic Relations: The Commercial and Economic relations have burgeoned in the recent years. Last two years have also seen the export and import baskets getting more varied. Indian imports include Mineral fuel, minerals oils, Natural or Cultivated Pearls, Wood and Steel articles of wood and Cocoa. Indian exports include Motorcycles in CKD form, Vehicles other than railways, Cotton yarn and woven fabrics of cotton, Organic chemicals and Iron & Steels. The trade figures for the last few years are given in the table below:

S.No	Year	Indian imports from Colombia (million USD)	Indian exports to Colombia (million USD)	Total Trade (million USD)
1	2014	2685.57	1297.36	3982.93
2	2015	552.20	1141.42	1693.62
3	2016 (January-September)	230.98	710.9	941.86

There has been a fall in the Colombian imports to India owing to the fall of oil exports. India-Colombia business organizations have been interacting on regular basis and a number of business delegations led by export promotions councils such as EEPC, EPCH, TEXPROCIL, SRPTC, CHEMEXIL, PLEXCONCIL, Spice Board of India, Electronic and Software Council, CAPEXIL and AEPC and Chambers of Commerce like CII have visited Colombia in the last 5 years. To promote bilateral business interest, a 'Colombia-India Chamber of Commerce' was formed in Bogota in September 2008 with the support of the Embassy.

Last one year has seen following commercial activities being undertaken in Colombia:

- 15 companies from Automobile Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) participated in BSM held in October, 2015.
- CHEMEXCIL, a buyer seller meet for chemical industry from Colombia and India was organized in Bogota on 2-3 December 2015. 45 companies from India and more than 100 importers from Colombia participated in the event.
- EPCH, the Export promotion council for handicrafts participated in the Annual Artisan Fair at 'Corferias' exhibition grounds from 4-17 December 2015. A delegation of 12 companies would be participating in December 2016.
- 45-member TEXPROCIL delegation participated at the Colombian textile fair, Colombiatex in January 2016.

- e. Three tour operators took part for the second time in the biggest tourism fair of Colombia, ANATO, held in February 2016.
- f. Under the “Make in India” initiative, Embassy held events in Barranquilla, Medellin and Cali in the last one year.
- g. PLEXCONCIL organized a Buyer seller meet in March 2016 with participation of 10 companies from India.
- h. Spice Board of India participated in the Food Fair, ALIMENTEC in June 2016. Chairman of the Spice Board headed the delegation and also had meetings with representatives from ICA (Colombian Institute of Agriculture and Fishery).
- i. A 32 member delegation from Pharmaceutical sector visited Colombia on 26 August for a buyer seller meet. An event attracting buyers/importers/government sector etc. on the pharmaceutical industry was organized on the sidelines of the Buyer seller meet by the embassy.
- j. 18 companies under the banner of ITPO participated in the Home Fair from 1-18 September 2016.
- k. Embassy has conducted lectures/presentations on Commercial issues in several Universities in last one year including University of Santo Tomas, University of Nariño, University of Sergio Arboreta and University of Buenaventura (all in Bogota).

Indian Companies in Colombia: Many Indian Companies have established operations in Colombia. Some of the known companies which are present in Colombia are:

- IT (TCS, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra Conviva etc)
- Pharmaceuticals (IPCA, CIPLA, Aurbindo Pharma, Dr. Reddy’s)
- Agro-Chemicals (United Phosphorus, Shraddha Chemicals),
- Automobiles and tractors (TVS, Bajaj, Hero, Sonalika and Mahindra)
- Plastics and Packing (Essel Propack)

In oil exploration, ONGC Videsh has on-going exploration and production operations in Colombia in 6 blocks. It’s joint venture with Chinese company SINOPEC called Mansarovar Energy owns a producing asset which produces around 40,000 barrels per day.

Praj industries have constructed 6 ethanol plants in Colombia with capacity of 1.05 million liters per day. Hero Moto Corp. inaugurated its motorcycle plant in Cali in September 2015. The plant was inaugurated with an investment of US\$ 70 million and a production capacity of 78,000 motorcycles initially. Essel Propack inaugurated its new factory in the same region on 15 July 2016.

Technical and Economic Cooperation: The number of ITEC slots for Colombia was increased from 25 in 2009-2010 to 40 in 2015-2016. A group of 25 English teachers have been going on ITEC scholarship to EFL University, Hyderabad for the last two successive years. This gesture has been highly appreciated by the Colombian government. Assistance under ITEC program included donation of a

US\$ 200,000 solar energy plant to Colombia in December 2002 and deputation of two Indian IT experts from May to July 2002 to advise the local government on IT related policy issues. India donated US\$ 1 million to Colombia in the wake of country-wide floods and damage to infrastructure in 2010. Recognizing India's efforts through ITEC, Colombian side also offered 4 scholarships for Indian students this year under their Language Assistant programme.

India and Colombia have agreements in Science and Technology, Bamboo technology, Information Technology, Sports and Health. An expert from TERI in the transformative uses of Bamboo visited Colombia from 28 September-5 October 2016. More cooperation, particularly in the use of Bamboo and renewable energy through TERI is expected in near future.

ICCR Scholarships: ICCR allotted two slots under its General Cultural Scholarship Scheme for Colombia under the Cultural Exchange programme for 2012-16. Several Colombian students have pursued Indian dance and music studies under the ICCR scholarship, with few of them still studying in India.

Cultural Relations: There have been several festivals, performances, exhibitions and film shows, etc. organized by the Embassy of India. Embassy in collaboration with the local talent regularly organizes dance performances at various universities during the course of the International Weeks held by them. Indian Dance and Gastronomy festivals are being conducted almost every year. Notable ICCR performance in the recent past has been: folk music group performance led by Bundu Khan in Bogota (July 2015), Rajesh Pandey group in Bogota in March 2016 and NAAD BRAHMA Jazz group led by Shri Joe Alvares in Bogota (27 October 2016). Javeriana University of Bogota has included Indian music and dance as compulsory subject in their graduate courses. The Embassy in collaboration with Indo-Colombian friendship societies and other stakeholders from the cultural field has also hosted many private Indian artists in their cultural tours like Kathak dancer Pandit Tribhuvan Maharaj, Kathak dancer Ms Pragati Sood and Odissi Dancer Meghna Das.

Mission organizes regular Kathak dance classes in the Embassy premises since 2012 using local dancers. Mission also organized a 6 month Bollywood dance course in collaboration with Uni Piloto University in February-September 2016.

Gandhi Jayanti is celebrated in Bogota and Medellin with active participation of the Indian community and friends of India. A weeklong event dedicated to non-violence is organized in Medellin by the Gandhi Foundation. The Embassy, in association with local Indian community, observes the festivals of Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali and Holi every year.

Embassy also has an in-house Yoga Instructor sent by ICCR. The Yoga instructor has been conducting 120 hour diploma courses at the prestigious Externado University in Bogota. Besides the unique diploma courses being conducted in collaboration with Externado University, mission has organized workshops,

courses and Yoga demonstrations at different Universities. The second edition of International Yoga Day was celebrated across Colombia in 8 cities with a huge local participation. More than 7,000 persons participated in the events commemorating second edition of International Yoga day in 2016. Embassy also organized a conference on 'Yoga and Peace' on 21 June 2016 in the chancery premises.

Indian Community: The Indian Community comprises of approximately 350 members, majority of them being professionals employed with IT, pharmaceutical sector and as representatives of other Indian firms. Recently, the mission has come in touch with a 150 strong Indian community which are located in the 'Valle de Cauca' region of Colombia. Their forefather migrated to Colombia in 1920s-30s. Although settled in Colombia, many of them have kept Indian traditions and culture alive.

Colombian visitors to India: Around 3900 Colombians visit India each year many of them for yoga, meditation, spiritual courses etc. The facility of e-Tourist Visa has been extended to Colombia.

Useful References:

www.embajadaindia.org

<http://www.embajadaindia.org/en/useful-links/in-colombia>

<https://www.facebook.com/EmbajadaIndiaBogota>

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