Celebrating Independence Day of Colombia
**haute couture** noun [ U ]
UK /ˈhɔːt kʊtɪər/ US /ˈhɔːt kʊtɪr/
original design, especially for an individual

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MARTHA CECILIA PINILLA-PERDOMO
Ambassador of Colombia

El futuro es de todos

Cancillería
Embajada de Colombia en Trinidad y Tobago

Celebrating Independence Day of Colombia

Tuesday, July 20, 2021
guardian.co.tt

MARTHA CECILIA PINILLA-PERDOMO
Ambassador of Colombia

El propósito w presidente Iván Duque, la vicepresidenta canciller Martha Lucia Ramirez y de todo el gobierno de Colombia es servir a los colombianos y los extranjeros residentes en nuestro bello y acogedor país, fortaleciendo las bases de nuestra democracia, para lograr un país más próspero y más incluyente, que nos garantice a todos desarrollarnos, progresar y ser felices.

Son los mismos desafíos que afronta toda la comunidad internacional, sin importar las características particulares de cada Estado, en estos tiempos de pandemia, ocasionada por el Covid – 19, que nos hace constatar, una vez más, que para superar este reto sanitario, económico y social debemos trabajar juntos.

En Colombia, la pandemia ha ocasionado un retroceso socio – económico, después de más de 20 años de avances significativos, sobre todo en la reducción de la pobreza. No obstante, mi gobierno continúa trabajando para superar la crisis y reestablecer las condiciones de vida de los colombianos y extranjeros en el territorio nacional y aprovechar esta oportunidad para hacerlo mucho mejor. Estamos convencidos de que poniendo toda nuestra inteligencia, nuestra creatividad y nuestra capacidad de trabajo, saldremos adelante y superaremos la pobreza. Los colombianos lo hemos logrado antes y lo volveremos a hacer!

Nuestra política exterior, orientada desde el Palacio de San Carlos en Bogotá y, puesta en ejecución, a través de su servicio exterior, tiene como objetivo coadyuvar al cumplimiento del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, Pacto por Colombia, Pacto por la Equidad, que incluye el fortalecimiento de las relaciones de amistad; económicas y comerciales; científicas, culturales y deportivas de Colombia con Trinidad y Tobago, Surinam, San Vicente y las Granadinas, Barbados, Guyana y Granada.

Durante medio siglo hemos recorrido un camino juntos, tiempo en el cual creamos la Asociación de Estados del Caribe y suscribimos el Acuerdo Principal sobre Comercio y Cooperación Económica y Técnica del 24 de julio de 1994. Desde 2019 nos guiamos, además, por la Declaración de Cartagena de las Islas de la Primera Reunión Ministerial Colombia – CARICOM, celebrada el 29 de junio de ese año.

Nuestra política exterior también se nutre de los logros y las lecciones aprendidas durante los 200 años de vida republicana, desde nuestro proceso de independencia, iniciado el 20 de julio de 1810 y sellado en la Batalla de Boyacá el 1819, y el posterior proceso de construcción del Estado – nación colombiano, basado en los principios democráticos y liberales. Y con la certeza de que el futuro es de todos!

Para terminar deseo expresar mis más sincero agradecimiento a mi equipo de trabajo y ProColombia – Caribe y a las autoridades diplomáticas, nacionales y locales, empresarios y sociedad civil y a los colombianos en Trinidad y Tobago, Surinam, San Vicente y las Granadinas, Barbados, Guyana y Granada, así como a los Secretaríos Generales de la Asociación de Estados del Caribe y de Caricom y sus funcionarios por su buena disposición para estrechar los lazos de amistad entre nuestros pueblos y gobiernos y aportar al desarrollo de todos.

La Embajada de Colombia está al servicio de todos ustedes para fortalecer nuestras relaciones bilaterales, regionales y multilaterales. Para conocer mas nuestro trabajo los invitamos a visitar nuestra página web bilingüe en español e inglés: https://trinidadytobago.cancilleria.gov.co y a escribirnos a: etrinidadytobago@cancilleria.gov.co.

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The intention of President Iván Duque, vice-president – Chancellor Martha Lucia Ramirez y and the entire government of Colombia is to serve Colombians and foreigners residing in our beautiful and welcoming country, by strengthening the foundations of our democracy to achieve a more prosperous and inclusive country, which guarantees us all development, progress and happiness.

These are the same challenges faced by the entire international community, regardless of the particular characteristics of each State, in these times of pandemic, caused by COVID-19, which makes us realise, once again, that to overcome this health, economic and social challenge we must all work together.

In Colombia, the pandemic has caused socio-economic setbacks, after more than 20 years of significant progress, especially in poverty reduction. Nevertheless, my government continues to work to overcome the crisis and re-establish the living conditions of Colombians and foreigners in the national territory and to take advantage of this opportunity to do much better.

We are convinced that by putting all our intelligence, our creativity and our capabilities to work, we will move forward and overcome poverty. We Colombians have done it before, and we will do it again!

Our foreign policy, which is guided from the Palacio de San Carlos, in Bogotá, and implemented through its foreign service, aims to contribute to the fulfillment of the National Development Plan, Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity, which include the strengthening of the democratic republic, based on democratic and liberal principles, and with the certainty that the future belongs to everyone!

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my work team and ProColombia – Caribe and to the diplomatic, national and local authorities, businessmen and civil society and to the Colombians in Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Guyana and Grenada, as well as to the Secretaries-General of the Association of Caribbean States and CARICOM and their officials for their willingness to strengthen the bonds of friendship between our peoples and governments, and contribute to the development of all.

The Embassy of Colombia is at your service to strengthen our bilateral, regional and multilateral relations.

To learn more about our work, we invite you to visit our bilingual website in Spanish and English: https://trinidadytobago.embajada.gov.co; and to write us at: etrinidadytobago@cancilleria.gov.co.

 Celebremos juntos el Bicentenario de la Independencia de Colombia y la construcción de nuestro Estado - Nación

MARTHA CECILIA PINILLA-PERDOMO
Embajadora de Colombia

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DECLARATION OF CARTAGENA DE INDIAS:
First CARICOM-Colombia Ministerial Meeting in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) meeting for the first time was scheduled in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on June 29, 2019, on the occasion of the Inaugural CARICOM-Colombia Ministerial Meeting to:

1. Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of official relations between the Caribbean Community and the Republic of Colombia through the signature of the Agreement on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation on July 24.
2. Recall that since the establishment of diplomatic relations some four decades ago, Members of the Community and the Republic of Colombia have maintained an enduring friendship rooted in our shared values, as well as our shared cultural, demographic and historical experiences, which have contributed to good neighbourliness and open dialogue within the Greater Caribbean and Latin America region.
3. Reaffirm their commitment to continue building on these unifying bonds of friendship, which acquire even more relevance on the eve of the commemoration of the Bicentennial Anniversary of Independence of the Republic of Colombia.
4. Applaud the recent demonstration of interest in continued high-level political dialogue between the Caribbean Community and Colombia as reflected by the recent visits of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia to the Caribbean, and the visits by Ministers of Government of Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago, The Bahamas and Haiti to Colombia in the last months.
5. Underscore their willingness to cooperate among other areas of common interest in the region, trade, transportation, culture, education, sports, environment, renewable energy, agriculture and agro-industry development, climate change, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, disaster risk management and recovery, world drug problem; and the fight against trafficking in persons and small arms and light weapons, cyber-crime, radical extremism, smuggling, money laundering, and corruption. In this regard, the Ministers recognise the importance of formulating practical solutions in these areas for the mutual benefit of their peoples.
6. Recognise regional integration as a suitable tool for sustainable and inclusive development of their countries, and in this vein, commit to strengthening the mechanisms of integration and agreement in the Latin America and Caribbean region, particularly within the context of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and endorse the tenets of the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace.
7. Note the volume and value of trade achieved between CARICOM and Colombia in 2018 which exceeded US$1,807 million. Also acknowledge the investment flow between the Parties for the 1994-2018 period, valued at US$4,557 million. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs agree efforts will be made to increase investment flows and improve the balance of trade.
8. Emphasise the importance of strengthening and consolidating trade, investment and tourism between the Caribbean Community and Colombia; also agree on the need to encourage the development and implementation of projects in these areas with the aim of promoting increased trade flows.
9. Highlight the need to hold the 7th Meeting of the CARICOM-Colombia Joint Council on Trade, Economic and Business Cooperation before the end of the year with the objective of updating and deepening the Agreement, and invite their respective authorities to meet periodically to overcome trade challenges and to promote trade, attract investment and enhance the tourism industry.
10. Promote the deepening of economic relations in the region by updating the current institutional framework to include new trade realities. This will allow for the creation of strategic alliances, to participate in global value chains and expand exports. In this regard, they invited CARICOM countries not yet party to the Agreement to give favourable consideration to acceding to the Agreement.
11. Reaffirm their commitment to promote sustainable tourism and encourage its integration in national, regional and global agendas in its function of acting as a catalyst for economic and sustainable development.
12. Reaffirm their commitment to the promotion of air and sea connectivity, which will foster enhanced trade and tourism links through the introduction of new routes.
13. Underscore the importance of air and maritime transportation to the Caribbean regional integration and its sustainable development.
14. Reaffirm their commitment to the identification of mechanisms that allow the strengthening and enlargement of opportunities for airlines, contributing to the increase of tourist exchange and bilateral trade.
15. Underscore that the Inaugural CARICOM-Colombia Ministerial Meeting is a forum for high-level dialogue that recognises culture as an unprecedented factor in the political agenda of the Member States of the Caribbean Community. This will undoubtedly help to make it visible and recognise the cultural diversity of the region, its multiple identities and its potential for creative productivity.
16. Recognise culture as a driver of the economy and sustainable development of the Caribbean. In this regard, encourage an increased focus on culture as a means of attaining the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
17. Deepen cultural dialogue between the Caribbean Community and Colombia with the purpose of exploring alliances for cooperation that promote the creation, production, distribution and circulation of cultural and creative industries in the region.
18. Recognise the importance of sport as a tool to promote talent and provide opportunities for youth population and in this regard, express interest in cooperating in the area of sports.
19. Agree on the potential that the health services and infrastructure of the region represent to the Caribbean countries and express their interest to deepen the cooperation in this area.
20. Welcome Colombia’s offer of cooperation to CARICOM Member States, aimed at sharing their best practices. In this regard, reaffirm their interest in strengthening cooperation relations and the bonds of friendship between Colombia and CARICOM Member States.
21. Highlight their interest and willingness to revitalise the relationship between the Caribbean Community and the Republic of Colombia, and in this regard, recognise the Ministerial CARICOM-Colombia Meeting as an ideal forum for dialogue, as well as for the strengthening of political, economic, cultural, social and cooperation bonds.
22. Welcome the accreditation of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Republic of Colombia to the Caribbean Community on June 12, 2019—which will facilitate continued engagement between the Caribbean Community and the Republic of Colombia.
23. Commit to regularly convene the CARICOM-Colombia Joint Commission in order to follow-up cooperation on items raised during the discussions and agenda issues. The first meeting will take place in the first quarter of 2020.
24. Commit to convening the CARICOM-Colombia Ministerial Meeting at least every three years with the purpose of reviewing and examining the implementation of the agreements adopted during their meetings and to continue high-level dialogue on cooperation.
25. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Caribbean Community express their gratitude to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia for convening and hosting this meeting and expressed their appreciation to President Ivan Duque for participating in the meeting.
26. Adopt the present Declaration, in two original texts in Spanish and English, on June 29, 2019.
How to bring the XXI century to rural schools in Colombia?

A ll developments can be categorised into paradigms, as paradigms are related to innovation processes. Think about it for a second: imagine what it felt for humanity to take the first commercial flights to travel around the planet. Before that, to cross the Atlantic, you had to do it by boat. Going from ship to plane, to put it simply, is to go from one paradigm to another.

In the educational field, there are also paradigms. Since last century, we have been educated under a paradigm called “the industrial paradigm.” This paradigm is characterised by homogeneously treating students.

Classrooms today are conformed by groups of students of the same age who share the same schedule. The origin of this social configuration comes from the factories in industrialised countries. Schools modelled production lines, working hours, and grouping in batches to replicate factories. The students, grouped in homogeneously batches, are moulded day after day, hour after hour, like a product. At the end of their learning journey, they receive a grade that assures the quality of the product.

This model emerged as an innovation to the agricultural educational model, like the plane to transatlantic ships. However, this model already shows that it is reaching the limits of its capabilities. Like steam engines, which had certain limitations, the current educational model also has reached an endpoint. Specifically, we found that those who graduate from these careers are those who enter teaching careers, then those who graduate from these careers are the worst ECAEs. In addition, many teachers graduate from higher education institutions that are not accredited. Inadequate teacher training can be attributed to low social and economic incentives to enrol in the profession.

Curriculum design is a practice that is responsible for planning and designing learning objectives, assessment processes, and learning processes. This is something that every teacher should do; we must think of the curriculum as education like the blueprint to a house. However, many educational institutions and teachers do not have adequate training to carry out this process. In Colombia, an educational process is an act of faith, like a built house without blueprints. In the Fundación para la Equidad Educativa (FEE) we are working to bring the XXI century to rural classrooms. We have designed an educational innovation process that includes blended learning, teacher training, instructional design, and community social work. Right now, we are working with 130 students and seven teachers in a rural school in Colombia. We have confronted the pandemic by implementing sound instructional practices to deliver the best quality learning under the current circumstances.

FEE was born during the pandemic, as an answer to the precarious education the students were receiving because of school closings. Since March 16 of 2020, almost all rural schools have been closed, forcing teachers to provide instruction through word documents developed by themselves. These instructional materials have many deficiencies, as teachers and schools were not prepared for remote learning. During the second semester of 2020, FEE raised funds to provide computers and internet connection to 31 rural students in Tunja, Colombia. Furthermore, there teachers had professional development courses to use these technologies correctly. Because of this, we had zero dropouts during 2020.

During the first semester of 2021, we acquired computers for another 100 rural students in Tunja. Instead of providing internet, we worked raising Kollibi, a learning management system developed by learning equality that provides access to educational resources without the need of an internet connection.

Thanks to mass vaccination, it seems possible that students go back to schools this July. It will be discouraging that those students go back to an educational model that is flawed and outdated. For this reason, FEE is developing the first rural blended learning model in Colombia. We are working to innovate the current educational paradigm, and innovate it worthily the information era.

To help us on our journey to develop the rural education of the future, we invite you to follow us on Instagram (@feecolombia) and visit our website (www.feecolombia.org).

NICOLÁS RUIZ
CEO, Fundación para la Equidad Educativa (Colombian Educator, 28 years old)

One million Corals for Colombia!

The President of Colombia, Iván Duque, launched the programme last June entitled, Restoring one million Corals for Colombia, in order to recuperate, rehabilitate and restore 200 hectares of coraline reefs to expand the cover of live corals in Colombia; as well as to contribute towards the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, SDG 14, which includes the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources.

This is currently the most ambitious project related to the formation of a coral reserve, which is supported by international co-operation. Corals create a protective barrier for the coastal regions of Colombia and the Caribbean region, especially during the hurricane season.

Presently, Colombia has 10,000 colonies of corals, at different levels of nutritional care, that thrive in 11 areas of the San Andres, Providencia and Santa Catalina Archipelago.

In addition, Colombia continues the restoration work through the Black Cangrejo Operation, on Providence Island. There are more than 320 families enrolled in the programme, Payment for Environmental Services, and employed in this process, by means of which 1,400 coral colonies have been recuperated.

Intervention areas

In the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, the areas that require intervention include: the Seaflower Marine Protected Area and the McBean Lagoon National Park.

In the continental area, Tayrona National Natural Park and Taganga Bay (Santa Marta, Magdalena); the Rosario and San Bernardo Corals National Natural Park, Barú Island, Palma Island and Fuerte Island (Cartagena, Bolívar); Rincón del Mar (Sucre); and the Playón Playa Acandí Fauna and Flora Sanctuary (Chocó-Caribe).

In the Pacific Ocean: the Utría National Natural Park (Chocó), and the Gorgona Island National Natural Park, (Cauca).
Why Colombia?
There is more than one reason

Interculturality, biodiversity, hospitality, unique sunrises, beautiful destinations, music, smiles and warmth. This is Colombia. The most welcoming place on earth. Each Colombian destination has a warm culture that is one-of-a-kind and an incredible variety of landscapes.

From cities with a new adventure at every corner, to colonial gems in the countryside. Cartagena with its historic and cultural richness. Medellín, recognised for its eternal spring weather and its innovation. Bogotá with its more than 220 miles of cycle routes and renowned gastronomy and, Manizales—known around the world for its coffee industry and breathtaking landscape.

The country has become a symbol of talent, hard work, passion and very friendly people who will give you a warm greeting; a world benchmark thanks to the talent and entrepreneurship of its people. The country’s geographic location, social and economic development, trade agreements, unique tourism and foreign investment offers outstanding commercial opportunities.

The Colombian government promotion agency, ProColombia, has delayed a fundamental role promoting the country as a world-class exporter due to its diversity portfolio. Colombia is a country famous for products held annually in July by leading clothing companies. Business conferences, forums, seminars, and exhibitions of Colombian and international designers’ fashions are held during this festival.

In Colombia you can see animals you’ve never seen before; Whether it’s sloths, parrots or pink dolphins; turtles, toucans or poison-dart frogs; capybaras, pelicans or anacondas, Colombia is one of the world’s most mega-diverse countries. Now, if the animals above land don’t amaze you, the ones underwater will. You can dive down to the reefs near San Andres and Providencia or head to Gorgona and Malpelo islands to be entranced by sharks, dolphins, turtles and whales.

Colombia celebrates everything and there are all kinds of festivals to pick from, including Barranquilla Carnival, Medellín Flower Festival, Valledupar’s vallenero extravaganzas, Neiva’s Bambuco Festival or Bogota’s ArtBo. Bogotá is also the perfect choice if you want to try it all in one city. Cafés, bars, haute cuisine restaurants, and clubs can all be found in the Zona Rosa. Passers-by will notice many hotels, shopping malls, and designer shops dotted around this area in the northern part of the city, where the nightlife is the main attraction. People often meet up here at the end of the workday, especially on Fridays. La Zona Rosa, is a vibrant area and one of the most important ones in the city.

And the one thing you must do even if you don’t do any of the above, is to have a cup of the best coffee in the world. Head to a hacienda in the misty hills of Colombia’s much-loved Coffee Cultural Landscape, learn how the world’s finest beans are grown, wait for a fresh brew, let that intoxicating smell linger in the air and sip.

Made in Colombia, quality guaranteed

Colombia, a country famous for products like coffee, emeralds, gold, landscapes and its people, has become a supplier of agri-business products, raw materials, industrial goods and health services. A wide variety of commercial opportunities, but few things create as much amazement and affection as the quality and variety of its flowers. The country is one of the world’s leading flower producers, exports more than a billion dollars worth of flowers each year, and the industry is growing. Colombia has grown from 2003, 55% of all cut flowers imported to the United States to over 70%, becoming in these days one of the main suppliers of this market.

In 2020, total exports to Trinidad and Tobago reached US$61.1 million, non-mining-energy products registered US$33.7 million. The most outstanding products being: sugar, auto parts, plastic and rubber, cocoa, coffee, fragile items, office, hotels and industrial goods.

Colombian export companies have been an ally of the private sector in the south of the Caribbean, through the supply of complementary products and services in areas that currently do not have local coverage; especially in industrial sectors.

Colombia has been a strategic partner for Trinidad and Tobago, due to its geographical proximity and the quality of the products to supply sectors such as construction, the energy sector, and the food sector.

In the Trinidadian market you can get Colombian products such as cookies, flour, snacks, coffees, yogurt, chocolate and others, with very representative brands of the South American country such as: Colcafé, Colombina, Turbana Chips, Café Matiz, Café Juan Valdez, Cookies Noel, Promassa, Alpina, Chocolisto, among others.

Another sector where Colombia is recognised and positioned is the health sector, which for Latin America and the Caribbean is a benchmark due to its great strengths, such as: optimal clinical experience, outstanding medical training, institutions internationally recognised, hospitals and medical institutions and warm and kind personal treatment, among others. There is a growing flow of international tourists interested in medical procedures in the country.

The main specialties demanded by patients are fertility procedures, Oncology, Cardiology, Bariatric surgery, Ophthalmologic surgeries, aesthetic dental treatments, plastic and reconstructive surgeries and comprehensive medical exams.

Colombia is a country that offers a favourable business environment with a stable legal framework. Thanks to its strategic location, Colombia acts as a bridge between North and South American countries.

Also, Colombia has an extensive free trade agreement network, which secures preferential access to more than 60 countries and 1.5 billion consumers around the world.

Among the opportunities for investors in the Caribbean are the sectors of Software, IT, BPO, hotel infrastructure, and equity funds. The government promotion agency seeks to publicize the benefits and incentives offered by the South American country when investing.

The country offers a responsible government committed to economic reactivation that allows it to capitalise on 50 years of economic growth to overcome the crisis of political stability with governments committed to the development of private activity.

Likewise, Colombia provides an attractive strategy for business relocation, including a network of trade agreements, international logistics and an incentive package for direct foreign investment. The country offers as well, a developed technological ecosystem, with standards necessary for recovery after COVID-19.

Some of the most representative firms in Trinidad and Tobago have believed in investment opportunities in Colombia, which has offered settling in and taking advantage of a market of more than 50 million inhabitants, achieving good commercial synergies in the country, constant growth and even most importantly, his vision of international expansion to Latin America from Colombia.

Macroeconomic strength, fiscal policies, as well as economic and political stability, legal security, and investment guarantees, have helped Colombia to stand out amongst regional economies, as a strategic hub for the supply of reliable and quality goods and services.

ProColombia has identified sectors with investment opportunities in the country which also have the Government’s support for their development, and it’s committed to continue joining efforts with companies interested or already established in Colombia. ProColombia also offers complementary services such as attendance to industry in Colombia, participation in business matchmaking forums securing relevant leads, and the elaboration of commercial agendas, among many others.

PROCOLOMBIA is the government agency that promotes international tourism, foreign investment, non-traditional exports, and country brand. For additional information about ProColombia’s services contact the Caribbean office.

Email: caribe@procolombia.co.
Tel (786) 315-4260

Tuesday, July 20, 2021
guaridan.co.tt
Greeting from Amery Browne
Minister of foreign and Caricom affairs of the Republic of T&T on
the occasion of the 211th National Day of the Republic of Colombia

On behalf of Prime Minister, Dr the Honourable Keith Rowley, the Government and people of the Republic of T&T, and on my own behalf, I extend best wishes to the Government and people of the Republic of Colombia on the auspicious occasion of its 211th National Day.

Since the signing of the 1810 Act of Revolution, Colombians of every region and background have built a nation of which its forefathers would be proud and which has left an undeniably positive mark on the region and the wider world.

T&T and Colombia have long enjoyed a linkage of people and history well prior to the formal establishment of diplomatic relations in 1968, just a few years after T&T celebrated its own independence. In recent years, that connectivity has served as the basis for deeper co-operation and collaboration between both countries.

I take this opportunity to commend the government of Colombia for its commitment to regional cooperation as evidenced by its Co-operation Strategy with the Caribbean Basin. This initiative has spawned a number of significant and valued technical co-operation programmes of which T&T has been a major beneficiary. In addition to the programmes on agriculture and security, I wish to make special mention of Colombia’s Spanish language training programme which has been extended to hundreds of public servants of T&T since 2016. This initiative has not only greatly enhanced the foreign language capacity within the T&T public service; it has also served as an invaluable opportunity for the sharing of our two unique and vibrant cultures and our public offices have particularly enjoyed their exposure to the spectacular culture of Colombia.

When the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to halt that programme, the government of Colombia worked with us to respond to the challenge and began delivering the programme virtually.

I have no doubt that the Government and people of Colombia will continue to meet the challenges posed by an ever-changing world and will achieve an even brighter future for all its peoples.

Congratulations once again, and our warmest regards to the Government and people of the Republic of Colombia on its 211th National Day.

Amery Browne, minister of foreign and Caricom affairs
Colombia, technology transfer and the Inter-American Business Charter: an instrument for socio-economic recovery

AMBASSADOR OF COLOMBIA
Martha Cecilia Pinilla-Perdomo

Medellín City is presently called the Silicon Valley of Colombia, however, many cities of our country are rising technological ecosystems that benefit from the support of the government of Colombia through the implementation of public policies and the provision of substantial funds which are geared towards the construction of the science and technology sectors of our economy.

Similarly, Bogotá and Cali are cities that have observed indicators that demonstrate progress in the utilisation and spread of technology. As cases in point, in the number of 1) startups; 2) technology professionals; and 3) the total amount of local foreign investments.

Therefore, Colombia has become Latin America’s third major hub and has the most rapidly expanding technological capacity, with very competent engineers who have pursued postgraduate studies in Computer Science and other related spheres of knowledge.

The draft Inter-American Business Charter is a proposal led by President Iván Duque to promote the role of the private initiative, as an engine of development and socio-economic growth in our American continent. We aspire to a Charter that boosts cooperation and technology transfer in the region, to drive innovation ecosystems that generate economic, social and environmental value and sophisticated business production.

Moreover, we wish to adopt a Charter that is aligned with the four pillars of the Organization of American States (OAS) which are: 1) development; 2) democracy; 3) human rights; and 4) security.

Additional Characteristics of the Charter under construction

On the basis of the four pillars, we desire a Charter that highlights the interest and willingness of the States to create the necessary conditions for the private sector to be a fundamental ally for the development of our region, reinforcing its contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and that is respectful of the sovereignty of the States to decide their own public policies and development priorities.

We also require a Charter that supports the growth and success of large, medium and small businesses, through policies for business entrepreneurship, formalization and financial inclusion.

Equally, we seek a Charter that advances efforts to attract and maintain investment in our region through the facilitation and strengthening of business creation and trade processes, as well as a stable and predictable legal framework that attracts more and better investment.

Additionally, we need a Charter that incorporates the role of women in industry, to increase productivity levels in the region, encouraging the formulation and implementation of public policies for the inclusion of women and equal conditions for the promotion of business creation on our part.

In the same way, we require a Charter that enhances sustainable business practices at the economic, social and environmental levels.

Consequently, we are looking forward to a Charter that strengthens the interaction between business and education so that our region can be more competitive and productive, and more people can contribute to and benefit from the value generated by business activity.

Economic context of our region

Even before the pandemic, Latin America and the Caribbean accumulated almost seven years of low growth, with an average of 0.4 per cent between 2014 and 2019. It is estimated that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of our region in 2020 had an average contraction of -7.7 per cent and, now, a rebound of 3.7 per cent is expected for 2021, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC).

According to ECLAC’s preliminary analysis, in 2020, Latin America and the Caribbean was the region hardest hit in the developing world by the crisis derived from the pandemic, caused by COVID-19; 2) the region’s growth, in the coming years, will depend heavily on the ability to support aggregate demand and productive sectors; 3) to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, it is necessary to attain a productive transformation towards environmentally sustainable sectors that favour job creation and technological innovation.

Since all companies, large, medium and small, contribute to the economic growth of many countries and generate employment and income for millions of households, their growth and sustainability in the region is a matter of priority for everyone.

Likewise, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as emerging ones can generate innovative business models and sustainable production practices, therefore the region needs to develop more suitable ecosystems.

Path to the Inter-American Business Charter

The Inter-American Business Charter initiative was born in September 2019, during the private sector forum of the Americas and was prioritised in 2020 because it is an ideal multilateral instrument to prop up our economies in the post-pandemic period. Last year, during the 50th Session of the OAS general assembly, the States welcomed Colombia’s proposal and established the mandate to negotiate the Charter.

In January 2021, during the meeting of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDB), a working group was created to contribute to the elaboration of the draft Charter, through deliberations and to support the Council in obtaining different proposals for each section of the draft Charter. The most active States during the negotiations on the draft Charter to be adopted by the region which although not binding, has an important political value have been those of Continental America.

Additionally, consultation activities will be carried out in the region, in which the private sector and economic associations will participate with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Role of Caricom Member States

Colombia believes that the region requires a political instrument, built on the common concerns and interests of OAS Member States, in order to harness the capacity of the private sector to contribute to the socio-economic stability of the American continent.

It is therefore very important for everyone to have the active participation of all Caricom Member States because these technical discussions nurture the draft Charter and help to co-create an inclusive international instrument for economic recovery in the post-pandemic scenario.

For all of the above, the government of Colombia requests the valuable commitment of all the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve the presentation of a balanced Charter that we can approve by consensus at the OAS general assembly, from November 10 to 12.

Post-pandemic scenario

In the midst of this pandemic, in the Americas, we have the opportunity to work together to bolster innovative strategies that foster the social and economic development of our peoples.

This will be achieved based on a vision of inclusion and sustainability, and deepening co-operation to build more just, peaceful and resilient societies in the Americas, in a post-pandemic scenario, that minimises global threats.

Finally, we hope with the Inter-American Business Charter will contribute to the achievement of a more equitable world, with greater wellbeing for humanity and the inclusive and sustainable development of our region.
Preventing and Countering Extremism and Terrorism in the Caribbean Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia

Terrorism represents a serious threat to all States. It menaces social structures, the stability of regions and global security. Colombia condemns all acts of terrorism, as it constitutes criminal and unjustifiable activity. Terrorism must be addressed as a transnational manifestation, associated with organised crime, which does not respect national borders. It therefore requires a holistic approach that takes this nature into account.

Terrorism is linked to crimes that often have transboundary effects, such as: drug trafficking, money laundering, migrant smuggling, illegal mineral extraction, among many other criminal acts. It is imperative to emphasise the need to act together against the emerging risks posed by terrorist activity in association with transnational organised crime.

For this reason, Colombia believes that multilateralism and international cooperation are the fundamental instruments to confront terrorism. Only a strong and coordinated response from the international community will enable the fight against terrorism, including violent extremism, to be successful.

Regional Efforts

Last June, I had the opportunity to participate in the virtual dialogue entitled Preventing and Countering Extremism and Terrorism in the Caribbean, organised by the Caricom implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism. The objective of the activity was to strengthen the capability of the members of the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community (Caricom) to adopt and/or implement the legal framework of both regional organisations.

This exercise allowed participants of the Caribbean region to deepen their understanding for the development of anti-terrorism measures, through the exchange of information on best practices and recommendations to guide governments, regarding: (1) The monitoring of the risk factors that fuel terrorist actions in each country; and (2) The development of criminal policy guidelines that counteract and neutralise the operational capabilities of terrorist agents. During the dialogue, I discovered that 10 Members States from both international organisations of the OAS and Caricom are not yet affiliated with the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism.

As such, I would like to take this opportunity, in my capacity as Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of Colombia to Caricom, to invite those States to join our international instrument against terrorism.

The Government of Colombia considers the deterrence of money laundering to be a central aspect of anti-terrorist measures, which aims to weaken and combat terrorism, by restricting the access of terrorist organisations to financial resources.

The international community must continue to work for greater and more focused cooperation, in terms of the means and resources, to combat the sources of financing for terrorism and money-laundering.

Violent Extremism

The phenomenon of violent extremism needs to be addressed comprehensively to increase existing technical and operational cooperation, strengthen the avenues and channels for improving the exchange of information and financial intelligence; and to improve judicial cooperation, among others. To that end, improved cooperation mechanisms must be defined, especially in the current context of the pandemic.

Throughout this year, the Government of Colombia is offering virtual cooperative activities to non-Spanish Caribbean Countries, such as: (1) a workshop regarding transfer of knowledge and technical cooperation on the fight against organised transnational crime; and (2) a course related to successful experiences for the prevention of extremism derived from international terrorism.
Colombia is committed to continue working together, in order to prevent and counter malicious actors, who continue to seek new ways to promote terrorism and violent extremism and inflict online harm, thus promoting radicalisation. Likewise, in the area of terrorism prevention, it is critical to address those conditions that encourage its spread and that cannot excuse or justify acts of terrorism.

This includes prolonged and unresolved conflicts, discrimination of any kind, the dehumanisation of victims, the weakening of the rule of law, and the maintenance of social, political, economic and cultural exclusion. The Government of Colombia believes that it is pivotal to adopt measures to strengthen the resilience and inclusion of societies, in order to resist terrorist ideologies and violent extremists. Anti-terrorism measures include communication and education efforts, the participation of civil society actors, and the development of national strategies. Colombia maintains that anti-terrorist activity should focus on the application of justice. Those responsible must be held accountable. It is vital to urge all States to comply without delay to their obligations under international law and the maintenance of social, political, economic and cultural exclusion. The Government of Colombia believes that it is pivotal to adopt measures to strengthen the resilience and inclusion of societies, in order to resist terrorist ideologies and violent extremists.

Colombian efforts

Colombia is part of the robust international legal framework in the fight against terrorism, ratifying 11 international instruments, within which the country seeks to strengthen its national, technical and legislative capacities to effectively prevent and combat this threat.

In addition, the State of Colombia participates in various specialised multilateral forums on this subject, established within the framework of the United Nations, and others at the global and regional levels that promote different initiatives and mechanisms for international cooperation.

In the Americas, Colombia is a party to the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism of the Organisation of American States (OAS) and actively participates in the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE).

Moreover, Colombia participates in the Christchurch Appeal, which draws upon the voluntary commitment of governments and technology companies from around the world, to help eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content (TVEC) online; and through community action, partner governments, technology companies and stakeholders have the means and the space to coordinate and respond to attempts to utilise the Internet, as a weapon of terrorism.
By September 2020, Colombia’s youth population, those aged from 14 to 28 years old was already 10,990,268 million. This means that they represent 21.8% of the total population, according to the National Statistical Agency of Colombia.

In terms of identity, 5% of youth consider themselves natives or indigenous persons, 7.2% as Afro-Colombians, and 0.01% as members of the Gipsy or Roma community.

In this phase of life, a person is in process of consolidating their intellectual, physical, economic, social and cultural autonomy. They are already part of the political community and, thus, they are able to elect and be elected. As such, next November 28th, for the first time in Colombia, members of the Youth Municipal Councils will be elected and consequently, they will be able to participate in the process of the adoption of public policies.

Unfortunately, between May and July 2020, there was the lowest rate of youth employment (34.9%) in Colombia, since 2001. It partially explains the majority of the pacific protests of the last semester.

As a consequence of this, during the first week of July 2021, President Iván Duque launched the Programme, Camello sí hay (Colombianism that means, ‘work, yes, there is’) to create 600,000 jobs for youth, during this semester.

Similarly, up to the end of the first semester of the present year, the government of Colombia has initiated 18 regional rounds of conversation, with the participation of almost 13,000 nationals, including youth, thereby establishing consensus for the benefit of the people of the five regions of Colombia.

With the same aim of ensuring youth participation, the Minister of the Interior, Daniel Palacios, led the first Communal Youth National Table, with representatives of the 32 departments of Colombia. Likewise, Colombian President Iván Duque announced last May that the government has decided to extend tuition-free college education for 97% of students attending public universities and technical colleges, beginning this semester.

Moreover, during the opening of the Innovation HUB at the National Service of Learning (SENA), in Bogotá, President Iván Duque informed that SENA joined the Colombian Pact for Youth, in relation to areas such as: 1) degree training, 2) the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 3) Orange Economy, 4) Entrepreneurial skills and 5) seed capital. The Orange Economy is a creative economy and a development opportunity for Latin Americans and Caribbean youth to take advantage of their talent in art, services, and our cultural heritage combined with ICTs. There were approximately 60 experts, from 17 countries, who met in Medellin, in September 2019, in order to discuss and analyse the Orange Economy, creative industries and train a network of leaders to disseminate knowledge.

In addition, President Iván Duque gave the national flag to the delegation that will represent Colombia at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. The double Olympic medalist Caterine Ibargüen, will wear our colourful flag uniform, on July 23rd, 2021, at the Olympic stadium in Tokyo.

In the same way, in order to continue providing training tools for children and adolescents, between the ages of six and 12, the ministry of sport has recently implemented the Sports in Schools for All programme, throughout Colombia.

Finally, in the municipality of Icononzo, department of Tolima, children received “PAZcicletas” (Peace cycles), donated by the Colombian Air Force with the Agency for Reintegration and Normalisation (RNA) and the Coronas de Gloria Foundation.

This initiative, PAZcicletas, symbolises a commitment to peace and reconciliation.

Nevertheless, a lot more has to be done for children and youth, in the years to come, with the solidarity of the international community!
The Inter-American Human Rights Commission and the Caribbean

CARLOS BERNAL
LLB, PhD (Law), MA (Philosophy), and PhD Philosophy; Professor at the University of Dayton School and University of La Sabana; Candidate to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission

The Inter-American Human Rights System is an overarching legal and political system encompassing countries with different traditions. This fact gives rise to a challenge: creating common minimum standards for human rights protections in the Americas and, at the same time, acknowledging the variety of legal, political, economic, social, and geographic circumstances in which states parties should implement the standards.

As a core legal and political institution, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission should appropriately respond to this challenge. So far, the Commission has adapted European Human Rights standards and allocated special weight to conceptions deriving from the Civil Law traditions that dominate Latin America. Certainly, this response has illuminated some possible higher thresholds for Human Rights implementation. Nevertheless, it has also entailed undesirable side-effects.

Firstly, it has deprived the system from valuable strategies for Human Rights protections that the Commonwealth nations have successfully developed.

Secondly, it has created implementation issues for the Caribbean parties to the Inter-American System, when they attempt—on the one hand—to maintain fidelity to their Constitutions and their political, legal, and cultural backgrounds, and, to comply with the Inter-American Standards that at odds with those traditions, on the other.

Thirdly, it has neglected the relevance of core Human Rights matters that, from the Caribbean viewpoint, should take priority in the Human Rights hemispheric agenda.

Among them count: the difficulties for real access to COVID-19 vaccines, the lack of a joint response to the migration problem, and the foreseeable catastrophic effects of unmitigated climate change.

The Inter-American Human Rights Commission should look up to the Caribbean.

This institution should learn from Commonwealth success stories with solving Human Rights problems.

Furthermore, the Commission should respect the epistemic priority of the Caribbean nations for accommodating their political and legal traditions to the Inter-American standards and should make its engagement in dialogue and in capacity building programmes with local officials more robust.

This is a necessary condition for strengthening the legitimacy and efficacy of the Inter-American System, and for achieving a hemispheric equilibrium concerning the protection of Human Rights.

The last UN Secretary-General’s Report on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, recognised the progress of the Government of Colombia in implementing the Peace Agreement, within the framework of the policy, Peace with Legality, even during the pandemic period.

The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, highlighted the support provided to victims, the reincorporation into society of ex-combatants, the substitution of illicit crops and the implementation of the Territorial Focused Development Programmes (PDET). The UN Secretary General also congratulated the Government of Colombia for having requested the extension of the presence of the UN Verification Mission until 2022; and its inclusion to oversee the sanction process led by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

European Union

Last June, the European Union and the Kroc Institute documented the achievements attained in the implementation of the Peace with Legality Policy in the Republic of Colombia. The European Union’s Special Envoy for Colombia and Special Representative for Human Rights, Eamon Gilmore, affirmed that the European Union will continue to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement, particularly the aspects related to 1) victim care, 2) reintegration, 3) rural development, 4) multipurpose land registry and 5) PDET.

The process of implementation is a 15-year challenge and the Government of Colombia is committed to accelerating its commitments in the upcoming months, based on the Peace with Legality Policy.

The Colombian Government further reiterated at the meeting with EU Special Representative, Eamon Gilmore, that it guarantees the legitimate expression of peaceful protest, however, rejects any form of violence; and insists on the application of law and order that has 1) a strict adherence to human rights and 2) zero tolerance for misconduct by members of the security forces.

Kroc Institute

The Kroc Institute of the University of Notre Dame is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Peace Agreement. Last June, the Institute highlighted the progress delivered by the Colombian Government, in fulfilling the commitments, as set out in the Peace with Legality Policy.

In a statement at the end of the meeting, President Iván Duque, delivered the 5th Report in relation to the progress, challenges and opportunities in the Policy’s implementation during the year of 2020.

The representative of the Kroc Institute, Gerard Martin, stated: “We want to express our congratulations for the progress made in the implementation of the Agreement,” and further expressed that: “we all know that 2020 was a particularly complex year because of the pandemic and because of insecurity in multiple regions implementing the Agreement. Despite these challenges, in our 2020 Report we underlined that there was progress in the overall implementation of the Agreement”.

The Colombian Government reiterated its commitment to the implementation of the Peace with Legality Policy and acknowledged the recommendations of the Kroc Institute to accelerate the chapters regarding 1) gender 2) ethnic and 3) political participation and the rejection of any form of stigmatisation in Colombia.
Colombia is a megadiverse country that has the largest biodiversity in the world per square kilometre and possesses some of the most important water resources. For instance, my country’s rivers are like arteries, with around 3,400 different species, 350 of which are endemic species. Colombia is the home of 20 per cent of the butterflies in the world that inhabit all over the country’s five regions.

The Andean Eastern mountain range; Chocó department, over the Pacific Ocean; the Amazon jungle; the Orinoco basin and the Caribbean coast are the regions that treasure the most varied species of butterflies.

Colombia has become a popular destination for birding, with more than 1,800 bird species, comprising 20 per cent of the birds in the world, 80 of which are endemic species. There are thousands of flowers like roses, carnations, and Colombia hosts the largest number of orchids in the world, with over 4,000 species and more than 1,500 being endemic species. There are also blooms of chrysanthemums, lilies and Michaelmas daisies.

Accordingly, the Government has developed the environment policy of Colombia Sustainable Biocenosis Power and impels the international community to prioritise environmental decisions and issues related to the reduction of impacts of climate change.

Similarly, the government of Colombia calls on States to co-operate resolutely to lead the efforts and facilitating the mechanisms of global co-operation.

Consequently, the United Nations general assembly adopted by consensus, last June, the political declaration entitled, Our Common Commitment to Effectively Addressing Challenges and Implementing Measures to Prevent and Combat Corruption and Strengthen International Co-operation, to assist States in combating the abuse of power, money laundering and bribery.

At the special session, President of Colombia, Iván Duque stated the following: 1) corruption is one of the most perverse holdovers to democracy, the rule of law and sustainable development; 2) the pandemic uncovered corrupt practices in the health systems of many countries, preventing corruption is a moral imperative; and 3) within Colombia, the fight is under way against trafficking in drugs, humans and weapons, with attention specifically focused on the crime of corruption.

Furthermore, President of Colombia, Iván Duque made a call for making the best possible use of the Convention against Corruption and engaging in debate on the strengths and weaknesses of the current international legal framework.

The United Nations has informed that the participants of the Special Session included: Heads of State and Government, Ministers and other high-level officials from Peru, Honduras, Guatemala, Zim- babwe, Colombia, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Serbia, North Macedonia, Latvia, Belgium, China, Germany, Albania, Mexico, Morocco, Singapore, South Africa, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Sweden, Portugal, Switzerland, Guyana, Bra- zil, Austria, Iran, Croatia, Liechten- stein, New Zealand, Monaco, Italy, United Kingdom, Cyprus, Mauritia- nia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Malta, Romania, Netherlands, Armenia, France, Belarus, Cuba, Angola and Paraguay, as well as the European Union.

In her greetings to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Bogotá, the vice-president and minister of foreign affairs of Colombia, Martha Lucia Ramírez emphasised that the government of Colombia has expressed its firm position that corruption, along with its criminal implications, cause the deterioration and degradation of 1) good governance; 2) democratic principles; 3) decent livelihoods of persons and the social fabric of nations; and 4) threaten the progress of development.

Likewise, Colombia welcomed the recent statement delivered by the G7 nations, in relation to reforming the global tax system. The pact seeks to establish a minimum corporate tax, agreed to by the Finance Ministers of Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and, in which a flat 15 per cent global minimum corporation tax will prevent multinational companies from evading the payment of taxes.
Modernisation of the Colombian Ministry of Defence and Integral Transformation of the Colombian Police Force

MARTHA CECILIA PINILLA-PERDOMO
Ambassador of Colombia

During a ceremony last June, in honour of
Dr Carlos H Trujillo, the former Minister of
Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence of
Colombia, who passed away in January of this
year, as well as to promote 134 new National Po-
lice officers and second lieutenants; President
Iván Duque announced the modernisation of
the Ministry of Defence and the comprehensive
transformation of the National Police service,
which is a branch of the Defence Ministry.
President Iván Duque presented a Bill to the
Congress of the Republic of Colombia, in order
to introduce the Police Disciplinary Statute, which
aimed to clarify that the National Police is
responsible for Public and Citizen Security, with
a special focus on the needs of Colombians and
foreigners living in Colombia.

Additionally, the Ministry of Defence will
be renamed the Ministry of National Defence
and Security, through a presidential order to
modernise the structure of the National Police,
strengthens the human rights policy and stan-
dards of service. The Vice Ministry of Defence
Policies and Citizen Security is also being cre-
ated to ensure the consolidation of public policy
on citizen security.

Similarly, President Iván Duque modified the
Colombian Security Council, by a presidential
order that integrated the Ministries of Health,
Environment, Information and Communications
Technologies (ICTs) and the National Plan-
ning Department, which will design the National
Security and Intelligence Strategy.

Prevention, Protection and Respect
for Human Rights

A Human Rights and International Human-
itarian Law Directorate is being formed in the
National Police, with the objective of ensuring
compliance with international treaties and pub-
lie policies, for the benefit of the national com-
unity. This Directorate, through its Human
Rights Observatory, will request the necessary
technical assistance from international human
rights organisations, thereby strengthening pol-
cy implementation in this area. Policewomen
and men will be trained together to ensure
standardised certification that enables the con-
sistent application of training actions.

A new disciplinary statute for the National
Police

The protection of human rights, under the
aforementioned Police Disciplinary Statute, will
be harmonised with the Inter-American Sys-
tem, the United Nations and the Constitu-
tional Court, through the prioritisation of disciplinary
investigation, in cases related to human rights
violations.

Police professionalisation and development

A fully autonomous Standards Center is being
established at the highest level of the Police
Service to validate the suitability of Colombian
police officers. As such, enhancing their profes-
sionalisation is one of the fundamental levers
in the transformation of the work culture of the
police. The National Police Standards Center
will oversee the designing of standards for the
development of procedures and the guidelines
for the amplification of police education.

The Directorate of Education of the National
Police is also being launched, signifying a com-
mitment to the consolidation of the police uni-
versity. The Directorate will be in charge of
solidifying professional programmes for the
comprehensive development of the uniformed
during their career, by ensuring training and
qualification of the highest quality. In coordina-
tion with the Ministry of the Interior, governors,
and mayors, the regional Training Centres will
consolidate the skills and competencies of the
nation’s police officers.

Use of force

Through the introduction of a Bill, clear cri-
teria will be recognised for the legitimate use of
force by the Colombian Police, as well as strict
permanent protocols on the conduct of the
reviews of force. This Bill will provide the legal
framework for the use and trade of lethal weapons
in Colombia and a decree that regulates the
issuance of traumatic weapons.

Moreover, in order to support the procedures
carried out by the Mobile Anti-Riot Squad,
friendly countries are being summoned to re-
ceive recommendations from international ex-
perts on mediation protocols, use of force and
intervention. The employment of international
best practices will contribute to the permanent
professionalism of the Colombian Police. In
that sense, all institutional doctrines are being
reviewed and improved to maintain actions in
line with global standards and protocols.

Citizen participation for the integral
transformation of the Police

A national dialogue is being convened to so-
citcitizens’ thoughts and input on strategic
ways to develop the Police service, called “Let’s
Talk about Police”. The Inter-American Devel-
opment Bank will manage this initiative, which
will contribute to the modernisation of the Co-
lombian Police Force.

Furthermore, a Commission is being orga-
ised for the Integral Transformation of the Po-
lice of Colombia to evaluate the contributions
of citizens, academia and civil society.

New identity to improve proximity to the
citizens

The Police of Colombia will be adopting the
blue uniform, aligning with international stand-
dards of police forces and law enforcement in
the world, which reinforces its civil nature and
em-
pathy, courtesy, tranquility and confidence that
Colombians and foreigners living in Colombia
expect and require of the National Police.

Increased technology for police effectiveness
and transparency

In addition, rapid progress will be made in the
implementation of innovative technologies
that allow greater effectiveness against crime
and increasing the response capacity to provide
better service to citizens. President Iván Duque
instructed the allocation of the necessary re-
sources to fortify the artificial intelligence and
data analytics systems, in the planning and pro-
vision of tools for the Colombian police service.

Technological integration is also being carried
out, which includes information systems and
data analysis to advance planning and response
to criminal acts.

The new police uniforms will incorporate
“body cams,” as a tool to increase transparency
and evidence in police procedures. Together
with the Ministry of the Interior, urban police
surveillance will be strengthened with an ad-
vanced system of unmanned aircraft in cities,
known as the START System.

Likewise, with the Ministry of the Interior,
the SIES Emergency and Security Integration
systems will be reinforced, by implementing
fingerprint plate and face recognition mechanisms,
among other advances that will be implemented
firstly within “smart cities.”

Personal and professional development with
a human approach

The Colombian Police will have better condi-
tions in terms of career and salary. A remodelled
career plan will be implemented by law in the
new statute. There will also be the provision
of career advancement opportunities for Co-
lombian patrols in recognition of their profes-
sionalisation, experience and excellence. These
developments will contribute to the motivation
and satisfaction of the uniformed, which will in
turn improve their important service.

New model of police surveillance

The National Citizen Security and Coexistence
Policy will present a model for police surveil-
ance that includes neighbourhood quadrants to
allow greater interaction with citizens. It has
been designed to better account for the coexist-
ence of citizens and security. This surveillance
model recognises the evolving challenges re-
lated to crime, while at the same time, fosters a
better relationship with society. These advance-
ments will contribute to the targeted provision
of the police service, according to the specific
requirements of each local context.
The Lawyer and his role in Innovation

The new challenges generated by the growing use and dependence on technology by public and private organisations; the challenges and opportunities proposed by the Cloud, the Internet of Things, Big Data, high connectivity and Artificial Intelligence, as well as the premise under which we live in a world in which...it is not a matter of if incidents will occur but when, it becomes evident the permanent need for learning and reinvention, where “Innovate” in the midst of the crisis, is the true hallmark that we must develop.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) support the functioning of governments and organisations, allowing the development of their mission for the former and the generation of profits for the latter. In this sense, technology makes sense today, as long as it is a tool to achieve these objectives.

On the other hand, lawyers, developing the “As If!” (*2) principle, must focus on making organisations’ innovation projects viable and mitigating the legal risks associated with them.

Recently, a new actor has emerged in organisations: that of “innovation”, which through technology increases profits, or improves the development of the mission object (*3), so it is essential to ensure trilingualism in organisations, between the areas: (i) Mission/business/innovation, (ii) Technology and (iii) Legal.

This sum of efforts takes on greater relevance in an environment in which the use of technology, dependence on it, interdependence and hyperconnectivity demands more effective management of cybersecurity risks. The World Economic Forum (WEF), for the year 2018, through its annual and global risk report, recognises within the major global concerns cyber-attacks, theft or fraud with data and the fall of critical infrastructures as events with significant probabilities of occurrence (*4) and therefore puts them on the radar of attention of companies of all levels and sizes. In accordance with the above, Data & ICT Consultants proposes to organisations to develop a Cybersilience Program, which allows to implement reliable digital security postures and focus on building capabilities that allow to operate in today’s digital environments offering confidence and value to all stakeholders.

*1 Law firm, with emphasis on Technological, Data Protection and Procedural aspects. Partners Nicolle Rojas JD Tamayo LLM and Rafael H Gamboa Bernate JD LLM IT, LLM IP. Highly Recommended firm by Ranking Leaders League.
*2 Trademark registered by Data & TIC Consultants
*3 Successful case. DIARI, Comptroller General of the Republic of Colombia.

Colombia

...is the only country in South America that has coast in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The five regions of Colombia are: Caribbean Region, Andean Region, Amazon Region and the Pacific Region.
Health co-operation and economic recovery through multilateralism

AMBASSADOR OF COLOMBIA
Martha Cecilia Pinilla-Perdomo

Colombia will continue to support multilateralism, in a world that increasingly requires the co-operation of all States. This will be advanced through sincere discourse, without ignoring differences, with the principal aim of empowering global governance, in the areas in which collaboration is essential for progress, namely, health-related matters and socio-economic recovery. In this context, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Caribbean Community Caricom, have significant relevance in the achievement of these goals.

Therefore, the government of Colombia will proceed to dialogue progressively with the most diverse actors in the international community because in the post-pandemic era, it is evident that in order to prevent, face and manage the global risks of the immediate future, comprehensive responses are required. Thus, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 has clearly identified the necessity to address universal issues in an articulate and generous way.

For the realisation of all the above, it is imperative to improve international instruments, as well as strengthen regional and multilateral organisations, thereby enabling the provision of increased and enhanced co-operation to different States.

In this way, the asymmetries that generate dangerous ruptures within countries and between nations can be surmounted.

The Colombian government is determined to promote health and economic issues in all multilateral settings to create the best conditions in the post-pandemic stage by optimising: 1) early warning procedures; 2) responsiveness; 3) the expansion of financing instruments for socio-economic recovery and 4) the expansion of commercial opportunities, whereby the opening of markets is reactivated, with neither sanitary barriers nor customs difficulties.

Colombia can potentially become the most qualified supplier of fresh and processed foods of excellent quality for the most demanding consumers in the world, given that the nation has the conditions to increase its scale of production in agriculture, agribusiness and processed foods.

However, for this to become a reality, sanitary barriers cannot entail years of diplomatic exchanges to obtain the requisite authorisation to permit the entry of Colombian goods and products in worldwide markets.

This is the case of coffee production with Crece, the Centre for Regional Coffee and Business Studies, which was created in 1986. The Centre conducts studies and produces knowledge that informs strategies, plans of actions and best practices for agricultural development and the reduction of rural poverty, in so doing, it creates an efficient and sustainable economy for coffee growers. As a result, the four main research areas at Crece include: 1) regional development; 2) coffee economy; 3) social and institutional development, and 4) education.

The production of coffee is one of the most important agricultural activities in Colombia. From the perspective of Colombian countrymen, it is of paramount importance that their dedicated work, on the land of their birth, will lead to a better quality of life. In a similar manner, this is the best way in which the international community and the South Eastern Caribbean can co-operate with Colombia for the consolidation of peace with legality and sustainability.

For instance, from the northern to the southern areas of Colombia, there exists a great range of temperatures, landscapes and cultures that enable coffee growers to cultivate exclusive fresh coffees, over the course of the entire year. The biodiversity of the Colombian regions that is present in the countryside ensures the production of an assortment of coffees. These are the reasons that underscore Colombia’s ability to offer high-quality green coffee beans from various geographic origins.

For all the aforementioned topics of mutual interest, Colombia calls on everyone to act collectively, with all the bargaining power that corresponds to the Latin American and Caribbean region, on the international scene; while offering support and technical cooperation in agricultural, health and social initiatives to T&T, reforestation efforts in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in addition to cultural and tourism projects in Barbados, Grenada, Guyana and Suriname.
The Sacred Landscapes from the Snowed Mountains of Santa Marta and the origins of the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community in T&T: We are all the same people

During the dialogue, the Colombian photographer Coque Gamboa, Mamo Crispin Izquierdo and the leaders of the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community, Chief Ricardo Bharath and Carib Queen Nona Aquan, exchanged ancestral knowledge regarding indigenous inhabitants of the Amazon region of South America (from Colombia to Suriname), who migrated to the Insular Caribbean.

It is necessary to highlight the contemporary maritime expedition that was carried out in the times of the administration of Colombian President Virgilio Barco (1986-1990), that began in the Amazon region and ended in the Insular Caribbean.

This excursion was made by using canoes that were 15 metres in length and boat oars, from the Napo River in the Amazon zone to the Bahamas Island, where Christopher Columbus, in his first trip from the Spanish Kingdom, arrived with three ships, on October 12, 1492.

The expedition proved the theory that the Insular Caribbean had been inhabited, in part, by indigenous tribes from the Amazon River Basin and Orinoco River, thousands of years before the “discovery of Abya Yala,” (America) in 1492. Abya Yala is the name used by the Native American nation of the Cuna people who inhabit the Darien Gap between Colombia and Panama, as well as Caribbean islands that are close in proximity to the American continent. The term is still used by the indigenous peoples of the Americas, which includes the natives of Bolivia.

The expedition was also advantageous in that it led to the collaboration of the native people of the northern region, which bolstered South America’s naval capacities and abilities, in order to continue explorations in the Abya Yala Continent (America).

Moreover, in around the year 2012, Puerto Rican Professor, Reniel Rodriguez-Ramos and others had conducted research on the topic regarding, “Long-distance exchange in the precolonial Circum-Caribbean: A multi-isotope study of animal tooth pendants from Puerto Rico.”

This article was published in the Journal of Anthropological Archaeology (2014), pages 220-233, by Jason E Lafloone, Reniel Rodriguez-Ramos, Luis Chanlatte Baik, Yvonne Narganes Storde, Miguel Rodriguez Lopez, and Corinne L Hofman, which stated: “These multiple lines of evidence indicate that interactions and articulations existed between pre-Columbian societies of the insular Caribbean and multiple regions of the surrounding continental mainland. These areas include not only north-eastern South America but also northern South America, the Isthmo-Columbian region (or Intermediate Area), and Mesoamerica (reviewed in Rodríguez Ramos, 2011). Thus, the extant body of evidence supports the notion that migrations and interactions were more variable, diverse and complex than proposed by traditional models of Caribbean cultural history and indicate the need for further research into the nature of these dynamic relationships and how these varied temporally and spatially. In other words, although there is clear evidence that pre-colonial island peoples interacted with numerous and wide-ranging mainland groups, the nature, frequency, intensity, timing, and importance of these interactions are as yet not well understood and continue to be the focus of much ongoing research (e.g. Hofman et al, 2011; Rodríguez Ramos, 2013)” Source: www.elsevier.com/locate/jaa

Evidently, there seems to exist the necessity for greater cooperation among the Archaeologists of the Great Caribbean region, in order to conduct joint studies that reveal the linkages between our native people of the Pre-Columbian period.

CAF, Development Bank of Latin America: Colombian Sergio Díaz-Granados elected CAF’s new executive president

Sergio Díaz-Granados will take office next September, for a five-year period, and will lead an institution that promotes our region with important annual approvals, since the beginning of its operations in 1970. In consequence, CAF is one of the main sources of multilateral financing for our countries, in order to improve the quality of life for all. CAF has also established itself as a think tank with a universal vision, thereby connecting Latin America and the rest of the world.

Indeed, CAF has financed millions in projects that promote sustainable development and regional integration.

Founded as a bank made up of Andean countries, CAF has grown to become a regional bank.

Today, the multilateral institution has 19 shareholder countries, as well as a loan and investment portfolio of US$28,000 million, which are fundamental to promoting the recovery of the partner States, after the social-economic crisis bred by the COVID-19 pandemic. The board of directors of CAF, composed of the shareholder countries, elected Díaz-Granados, a Colombian lawyer who currently serves as executive director for Colombia in the IDB Group. The CAF Member States are: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, T&T, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Díaz-Granados is also a specialist in government and finance from the Externado de Colombia University, with postgraduate studies in Management for Social Development, carried out at INAP (Spain), and higher studies in Constitutional Law, from the University of Salamanca.

He has broad career experience with a special emphasis on regional development and integration issues.

In fact, during his tenure as Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Colombia (2010-2013), he was a member of the Directorate of CAF.

As Deputy Minister of Business Development (2006-2008), he worked on the creation of the Banca de las Oportunidades, a programme that has continued as an instrument of financial inclusion and has motivated reforms to improve the business environment in Colombia. Díaz-Granados also served as Advisor to the Minister of Finance and Public Credit and was a congressman and chairman of the Economic Affairs Committee.

He was president of the Colombian Association of Travel and Tourism agencies, the main trade union in the tourism sector and of the boards of directors of Bancólex (the Colombian development bank, focused on promoting business growth and foreign trade), ProColombia, the National Guarantee Fund, the National Tourism Fund and Marca País.

Thus, Díaz-Granados has an ample view of the world, based on the internal dynamics of each country and the functioning of the State, liberal democratic institutions, business interactions and joint initiatives involving public-private partnerships.
Science Diplomacy for Cooperation among scientific communities to face novel health challenges

By Ambassador of Colombia
Martha Cecilia Pinilla-Perdomo

The challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have strengthened the perseverance of the Colombian Government through heightened approaches to working intelligently and creatively, in order to discover and deliver, both national and international solutions that seek to simultaneously serve all citizens and foreigners in Colombia and to continue bolstering fraternal relations in the world.

Colombia’s National Development Plan: Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity, is based on: 1) the rule of law; 2) institutional and democratic strengthening; 3) the commitment to achieve a social market economy which fosters wealth creation for the benefit of all members of society, commencing with the economic empowerment of women.

The Colombian Government is convinced that the future must be anticipated with sustained interest, understanding and caution, considering that many scientific investigations and analyses have predicted that the human species will continue to face novel health challenges, which include new strains of viruses, diseases and risks. Consequently, comprehensive cooperation within the scientific communities and the convergence in the operations of laboratories is the best way to respond to these imminent threats together.

Colombia has the capacity to produce vaccines during this period of the current global pandemic because many of its laboratories are certified with the highest international standards. This is the case of VaxThera, a Colombian enterprise of the Sura Group. Jorge Emilio Osorio, Chief Executive Officer of VaxThera and scientist, explained recently that 11 Colombian scientists are engaged in collaborative work with Indian scientists at Wisconsin University, with the purpose of producing a universal vaccination against COVID-19. The pre-clinical phase has already been successfully concluded and the next phase which involves clinical studies will be initiated shortly in Colombia.

The other line of the development of VaxThera entails infrastructural expansion through the installation of a production plant of 35 thousand square meters in Colombia. This upgrading of the facilities of VaxThera will create one thousand new jobs and produce 100 million doses of vaccinations yearly, with an initial investment of US$54 million. Finally, VaxThera will invest in research and productive capacity to generate vaccines against chikungunya, dengue, influenza, yellow fever, and zika.

Nevertheless, it is crucial that governments promote and enhance cooperation, among entrepreneurs, scientists and researchers to manufacture and increases supply of better quality goods, which would be beneficial to humanity across the globe. The Colombian Minister of Health and Social Protection, Fernando Ruiz-Gómez explained that a special ministerial Unit will be tasked with the responsibility of designing national health policy to support local production capacity for the generation of vaccines.

The complex challenges that are foreseen represent substantial opportunities for the renewal and reinvigoration of regional integration, coordination, and cooperation in the development of Latin American, Caribbean and Inter-American relationships and partnerships, which would elevate the international status, presence and prestige of our nations in global fora.

In the immediate term, Colombia requires international cooperation in order to accelerate the vaccination process and guarantee a safe reopening of the country; expand the supply of jobs and offer greater stability for the population. Despite the successful negotiations that have been carried out by the Colombian Ministry of Health, for the procurement of vaccines to inoculate 70% of the populace, the delivery schedule of the laboratories is gradual, and it is expected that the completion of the COVID-19 vaccine deployment in the national territory will be achieved by next December.
Celebrating 10 years of the Pacific Alliance

AMBASSADOR OF COLOMBIA MARTHA
CECILIA PINILLA-PERDOMO

This year the Pacific Alliance is commemorating 10 years of the establishment of this regional integration mechanism composed of Colombia, Chile, México and Perú. Trinidad and Tobago is an Observer State and for this reason, Doctor Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and Caricom Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, joined this important celebration by delivering a congratulatory video message.

This represents an opportunity to foster a fruitful dialogue, that will make it possible to jointly undertake projects of cooperation and enhance the relationship between the Pacific Alliance and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, with a view to further strengthening our ties.

In relation to economic promotion, more than 180 activities have been organised to promote exports, investment and tourism; with more than 3500 participants of exporting and importing enterprises of the four countries, generating business projections in excess of US$ 1000 million.

The interoperability of the One window of foreign trade has permitted in real time, the exchange of 91267 origin and phytosanitary certificates, with benefits for all, including savings in costs and time. In 2014, the four Stock Exchanges were linked to form the Mercado Integrado Latinoamericano (MILA) of Latin America and the Caribbean, in one financial market.

Likewise, in order to potentiate the innovative ecosystems, within the Pacific Alliance, four nets have been created: 1) accelerators, 2) investors, 3) innovation and 4) technology transfer. In 2021, the four countries of the Pacific Alliance agreed to remove the requirement of visas for tourism and business purposes to facilitate the free movement of people.

Additionally, more than 3000 nationals of the four countries have benefited from the creation of the Academic and Student Mobility Platform in 2013; its scholarships program and the Youth Voluntary Program. In the same way, these countries are working together to strengthen the provision of technical and professional education, in order to nurture youth development, as well as the productivity and competitiveness capacities of the Pacific Alliance.

Since 2012, the Pacific Alliance has formed partnerships with the private sector through the Entrepreneur Council. In this pandemic period, the Pacific Alliance has advanced substantial efforts to obtain developments in digital instruments; e-commerce is therefore an indispensable tool for this purpose.

With the objective of guiding the future work of the Pacific Alliance, the Strategic Vision 2030 was adopted in 2018, in order to consolidate the nature of this mechanism, as more integrated, global in scope, connected and orientated for the benefit of the people.

Due to the increasing relevance of the Pacific Alliance, there are six nations that are seeking to become Associate Members States: Australia, Canada, Ecuador, New Zealand, Singapore and South Korea.

The Pacific Alliance has considerable interest in continuing revitalising the relationship with the Observer States, by promoting the deepening of work with strategic partners, such as the Republic of T&T, with the common purpose of generating favourable conditions for the economic growth and sustainable development of our countries and nations.

Accordingly, the 9th Pacific Alliance Entrepreneurship and Innovation Forum Lab will be held virtually from July 21st to 26th, 2021. An invitation has been cordially extended to Trinidad and Tobago to participate in this Forum, which presents a significant opportunity to generate potential business and growth prospects.

The recorded celebration to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Pacific Alliance, with the four Presidents of the Members States and the message of congratulations of Senator the Honourable Dr Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and Caricom Affairs of the Republic of T&T, can be accessed via the following web link: https://twitter.com/i/broadcasts/1MYGNmeydYEPKw.