

Brief on Colombia Bilateral Relations

Colombia and India established diplomatic relations on 19 January 1959 and completed 60 years in 2019. In March 1972, Colombia opened its Embassy in New Delhi. India, opened its Embassy in Colombia the following year. Over the years, the relationship between the two countries have strengthened and diversified in all areas of mutual interest encompassing political, commercial and cultural fields.

A. Political relations

2. India and Colombia enjoy friendly and cordial bilateral relations. Both countries collaborate in various multilateral fora. Foreign Office Consultations Mechanism was established in 1995. The last Foreign Office Consultations took place in March 2017 in New Delhi.

3. President Ram Nath Kovind sent a message of felicitation to President Ivan Duque, after the latter was sworn in as the new President of Colombia on 7 August 2018. External Affairs Minister met her counterpart on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September 2018. Gen. V.K. Singh, MOS (EA), met Colombian FM in October 2018 during his visit to Colombia. During the UN General Assembly in 2019, a pull aside meeting was held between our Prime Minister and Colombian President Ivan Duque.

Bilateral Visits:

4. Since establishment of diplomatic relations, a number of high level visits have taken place from both sides. The last VVIP-level visit from India to Colombia was in 1968 by then Prime Minister late Indira Gandhi. The last VVIP-level visit from Colombia to India was by President Andres Pastrana Arango in March 2001. A list of the high level visits is at **Annexure I**.

Bilateral Agreements/Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs)

5. A number of MoUs / Agreements have been concluded between Indian and Colombia over the years concerning areas such as defence cooperation, trade promotion, cooperation in science and technology, IT, tourism, etc. A list of MoU's/ Agreements concluded between the two countries is attached at **Annexure II**.

B. Economic and Commercial Relations

6. Bilateral trade between India and Colombia had been steadily growing until 2014 and reached approximately US\$ 4 billion (largely as a result of oil imports by India from Colombia). However, following the global slump in oil prices, that affected Colombian exports of oil, bilateral trade registered a decline in 2015 and 2016. From 2017, bilateral trade has once again started growing. In calendar year 2018, bilateral trade was approximately US\$ 2.1 billion. India's imports from Colombia include mineral fuels, precious stones (pearls), aluminum, zinc, wood (teak), plastic etc. India's exports to Colombia include vehicles

(motorcycles etc.), cotton, pharmaceuticals, iron & steel products, chemicals, etc. 2015 onwards, the balance of payments has remained in favour of India.

i) Bilateral Trade Figures :

S.No.	Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
1.	EXPORT OF INDIA	886.89	784.50	939.14	1,116.85
2.	%Growth y-o-y	-19.75	-11.54	19.71	18.92
3.	IMPORT OF INDIA	807.79	593.96	592.80	1,054.98
4.	%Growth y-o-y	-62.16	-26.47	-0.20	77.97
5.	TOTAL BILATERAL TRADE	1,694.68	1,378.47	1,531.94	2,171.83
6.	%Growth in the Total Bilateral Trade	-15.17	2.63	16.49	9.75
7.	TRADE BALANCE	79.10	190.54	346.34	61.87

ii) Bilateral Investment: Colombian investment in India is estimated to be approximately US\$ 5 million and the Indian investment in Colombia is estimated to be US\$ 300 million (excluding ONGC Videsh Limited's (OVL) investment in its joint venture with Mansarovar). Indian investment in Colombia is mainly in the oil, automobile, agro-chemicals, IT and pharmaceuticals sectors.

Indian side has been undertaking trade facilitation activities include responding to trade queries, addressing trade disputes, assisting visiting export promotion councils/industry associations in organizing their events (BSMs, RBSMs, Roadshows, India Forums, etc.), advising and facilitating meetings for visiting Indian businessmen, encouraging participation of Colombian buyers/importers to major trade events organized in India and vice-versa. Indian side is also promoting Indian exports through meetings held with local companies, National Hydro-Carbon Agency, government authorities and other stake-holders, to boost bilateral trade and investment in India.

A number of Indian business delegations led by export promotion councils such as EEPCC, 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 over the years and organised activities including buyer-seller meets, participation in agro trade fair, textile fair etc. The Embassy has organized 'Make in India' events, seminars, Trade and investment promotion events, ITEC day and Paryatan Parv.

To promote tourism and investment, the Embassy of India has organized Tamilnadu, Punjab, Odisha, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh States' promotion days, under the state facilitation activities. Other tourism promotion activities of the Embassy include organizing presentations, networking sessions for Colombian tour operators in collaboration with Tourism Office, New York, Paryatan parv, setting up of India Pavilions in various fairs, India Weeks and International Weeks, organized by universities, municipalities, etc.

iii) Indian Companies in Colombia: Indian companies in Colombia are mainly concentrated in the oil, IT, pharmaceutical, agrochemicals, infrastructure and two-wheeler sectors.

1. ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the only Indian public sector enterprise in Colombia, has both independent operations and a joint venture with Chinese Company Sinopec called Mansarovar Energy Ltd (MEL).
2. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Tech Mahindra, Mahindra Comviva, Infosys, Wipro, IGT Services and Technologies Colombia SAS (Technology/ IT/ ITES)
3. IPCA, CIPLA, Aurobindo Pharma, Dr. Reddy's, MSN Labs (Pharmaceuticals)
4. United Phosphorus Limited, Sharda Cropchem Ltd (Agrochemicals)
5. TVS, Bajaj, Hero, Royal Enfield, Sonalika and Mahindra (Automobiles and tractors)
6. Essel Propack (Plastics and Packing)
7. Shapoorji Pallonji, Jindal Steel (Infrastructure)
8. Lighting Havell's Sylvania (LEDs)

ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) started operations in Colombia in 2008 and MEL in 2006, and they continue both exploration and production of oil in Colombia. Praj industries has constructed ethanol plants in Colombia in the Valle del Cauca region. Hero Moto Corp inaugurated its motorcycle assembly plant in Villa Rica (Cauca), near Cali in 2015. Essel Propack also set up its packaging factory in the same region in 2016. Bajaj has its main assembly unit in the city of Medellin and a three wheeler plant was recently incorporated in Barranquilla. UPL has its agrochemicals manufacturing plant in the city of Barranquilla in the North.

C. Technical and Economic Cooperation, ICCR Scholarships

7. ITEC day is celebrated annually by the Embassy of India in Bogota. Under the ITEC programme, 25 school teachers have been trained in teaching of English language every year since 2015. During 2018-19, 91 ITEC slots were utilized by Colombia. The number of ITEC slots for Colombia has been increased to 100 for the year 2019-20.

8. Assistance under ITEC program in the past includes gifting of a US\$ 200,000 solar lighting system to Tayrona National Park, Santa Marta, 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.

9. Colombia has offered 8 scholarships for Language Assistants and another 8 scholarships to tourist guides to learn Spanish in Colombia in 2017 and 2018.

10. Colombian students have pursued Indian dance and music studies under the ICCR scholarship in the past. Six Colombian students have availed the ICCR scholarship since 2009.

D. Space cooperation

11. On 29 November 2018, ISRO successfully launched FACSAT 1 satellite of Colombian Air Force on PSLV-C43/HysIS mission. It was the first ever Colombian Air Force Nano-satellite. This was a historic occasion in India-Colombia relations and received excellent publicity for India's prowess in the field of space sciences. Two Colombian officers attended training in India from October-December 2019 under UNNATI (UNISpace Nanosatellite Assembly & Training by ISRO).

E. Cultural Relations

12. There is growing interest among Colombians about India's culture and heritage. The IDY (International Day of Yoga) events have given a further fillip to the popularity of Indian culture. Indian festivals, dances, music, gastronomy, spirituality are of increasing interest to Colombians. Some Colombians, who earlier learnt Indian classical and folk dances in India are now professional performers.

13. Several festivals, performances, exhibitions, and film shows, etc. have been organized by the Embassy of India in Bogota during the last few years. This included dance performances at various universities during the course of the International weeks held by them in collaboration with local professionals. The celebration of 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi began on 2 October 2018, with the launch of a digital commemorative stamp on Mahatma Gandhi. During one year of commemoration of the 150th anniversary, Embassy organized lectures/seminars, conferences, screenings of Gandhi documentary, donation of copies of "My Experiments with Truth" in Spanish, tree plantation, and lectures by eminent Professors. The Embassy also organized an event to mark 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev ji in November 2018.

14. Yoga is very popular in Colombia and there are number of Yoga institutes engaged in organizing regular yoga classes. Yoga Teachers (TIC) deputed by ICCR have been on the strength of the Mission since January, 2016. Using the availability of TIC, the Mission has organised lectures/conferences/presentation on Yoga and Indian Culture, yoga classes for general public, diplomatic corp, corporate sector and the Embassy officials. The Mission has also organized Yoga Instructor Diploma Courses in *Externado* University and *Piloto* University.

15. The Mission has been organizing International Day of Yoga in several cities of Colombia. Some of these events are organized by the Mission and the remaining in association with yoga institutes and municipalities. Over 10,000 Yoga enthusiasts participate in these events. In 2018, there were 22 Yoga events and in 2019, 15 events were organized to mark the International Day of Yoga in all major cities of Colombia (Bogota, Medellin, Cali, Barranquilla, Cartagena etc.).

16. **Busts Installed:** There are two busts of Mahatma Gandhi installed in Bogota, one at CINSET Corner, and the other at Municipal Library at El Tunal. A bust of Rabindranath Tagore has been installed at the Caro y Cuervo Institute.

F. Indian Community

17. The Indian Community comprises of approximately 539 members (450 NRIs and 89 OCIs). A majority of them are professionals, employed with IT firms like TCS, Oracle, Sophos Banking Solutions, etc. Indian Associations, Amigos de la India and Somos Indios are Indian associations, which organize Indian festivals and other cultural activities in which both Indians and Colombians participate. There is approximately an 89 member community of Indian origin people, located in the 'Valle de Cauca' region of Colombia. Their forefather migrated to Colombia in 1920s-30s from the erstwhile Bengal. Although settled in Colombia, many of them have kept Indian traditions and culture alive.

G. Colombian visitors to India

18. The number of visitors from Colombia to India has been rising. In 2019, over 5,000 Colombians visited India, for tourism, business yoga, meditation, spiritual courses, etc.

H. Multilateral Cooperation

21. India and Colombia coincide and converge on various multilateral issues of international importance including climate change and reforms of global multilateral organizations. India and Colombia support each other's candidature in various multilateral fora.

I. Useful References:

<https://www.eoibogota.gov.in/>

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

<https://twitter.com/IndiaEmbBogota>

31 January 2020

Annexure I

From India

S. No.	Visit	Month	Year
1.	Late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi's State visit	-	1968
2.	Late Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao to attend NAM Summit in Cartagena	-	1995
3.	Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, MOS (EA)	September	2004
4.	Shri Shashi Tharoor, MOS (EA)	January	2010
5.	Prof. Saugata Roy, MOS for Urban Development	-	2010
6.	Shri Dinsha Patel, MOS for Mines	May	2011
7.	Shri Vivek Katju, Secretary (West) for Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)	July	2011
8.	Dr. Rahul Khullar, Commerce Secretary	August	2011
9.	Shri Sachin Pilot, MOS (C&IT)	April	2012
10.	Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia MOS (C&I)	June	2012
11.	Shri Parvez Dewan, Secretary (Tourism)	October	2014
12.	Shri R. Swaminathan, Special Secretary (AMS&CPV) for FOC	November	2014
13.	Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, MOS (IC) (P&NG)	May	2015
14.	Smt. Rita Teatota, Commerce Secretary	May	2017
15.	Gen (Retd) V.K. Singh, MOS(External Affairs)	October	2018

From Colombia

S. No.	Visit	Month	Year
1.	Foreign Minister Dr Rodrigo Pardo Garcia-Peña attended NAM Ministerial Meeting	April	1997
2.	President Andres Pastrana Arango for the first State Visit from Colombia	March	2001
3.	Foreign Minister Carolina Barco Isakson	February	2003
4.	Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Camilo Reyes	May	2004
5.	Defence Minister Juan Manuel Santos	November	2007
6.	Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Mr. Luis	April	2008

	Guillermo Plata		
7.	Minister of Energy and Mines, Mr Hernan Martinez Torres	-	2008
8.	General Fernando Soler Torre, Deputy Chief of Colombian Air Force attended the Aero India	February	2009
9.	Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Clemencia Forero Ucros	April	2009
10.	Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez accompanied by Commerce, Industry and Tourism Minister	November	2009
11.	Vice President Francisco Santos	April	2010
12.	Vice Foreign Minister Monica Lanzetta	November	2011
13.	Vice Foreign Minister Patti Londoño	March	2012
14.	Vice Minister of Business Development, Carlos de Hart	February	2013
15.	Minister of Information Technology, Mr. Diego Molano	August	2013
16.	Vice Foreign Minister Patti Londoño	March	2017
17.	Foreign Minister Ms. Maria Angela Holguin, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Ms. Maria Lorena Gutierrez and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Patti Londoño	November	2017

SI No.	MOUs Agreements	Signed on
1	Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Colombia <i>(Validity 3 years/continuation for successive periods of one year at a time)</i>	1970
2	Cultural Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Colombia <i>(Validity 5 years/automatic renewal)</i>	1974
3	MoU on Annual Foreign Office Consultations	1995
4	Agreement between the Foreign Service Institute of India and the San Carlos Diplomatic Academy of the Republic of Colombia for Academic Cooperation <i>(Valid for 3 years/automatic renewal)</i>	2001
5	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Colombia on Visa exemption for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders <i>(Valid till denounced by either party)</i>	2001
6	MoU between the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the Ministry of Environment Government of Colombia to execute the Project on 'Provision of Solar Energy Equipment for Tayrona National Natural Park' <i>(Valid till completion of the project)</i>	2002
7	MoU between the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of Colombia and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of the Republic of India on Bilateral Cooperation in the field of Information Technology <i>(Valid indefinitely)</i>	2002
8	MoU between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Colombia on Cooperation in Science & Technology	2005

	<i>(Valid for 5 years/automatic renewal)</i>	
9	MoU between the Government of India and the Government of Colombia on Cooperation in the field of Urban Public Transport Systems and Urban Transport Planning <i>(Validity 3 years. To be renewed)</i>	2007
10	MoU between the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Mines & Energy, Government of the Republic of Colombia on Cooperation in Hydrocarbon sector <i>(Valid indefinitely)</i>	2008
11	MoU between the Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Colombia and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of India on Defence Cooperation <i>(Validity 5 years/automatic renewal)</i>	2009
12	MoU on Cooperation in Bamboo Applications and Research and Development between the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Government of the Republic of Colombia <i>(Validity 5 years/automatic renewal)</i>	2009
13	Agreement on Bilateral Promotion and Protection of Investment between India and Colombia <i>(Validity 10 years/automatic renewal)</i>	
14	Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Health between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Social Protection of the Republic of Colombia <i>(Validity 4 years/automatic renewal)</i>	2010
15	MoU on Business Development Cooperation between the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Department of Commerce of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Tourism of the Republic of Colombia <i>(Validity 5 years/automatic renewal)</i>	2010
16	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Republic of Colombia for the Avoidance of Double Taxation	2011

	and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income <i>(Valid indefinitely)</i>	
17	MoU between the Ministry of Mines and Energy of Colombia and the Ministry of Mines of India for Cooperation in the field of Geology and Mineral Resources – <i>(Validity 5 years/automatic renewal)</i>	2011
18	MoU between the Colombian Federation of Software Industry and Related Technologies – FEDESOFTEC and National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) <i>(Valid till termination/automatic renewal)</i>	2013
19	MoU between the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, the Government of the Republic of India and the Administrative Department of Sports, Entertainment, Fitness and Leisure (COLDEPORTES) of the Government of the Republic of Colombia <i>(Validity 3 years/renewal by mutual consent)</i>	2014
20	Agreement on Free Exercise of Gainful Occupation of Dependent Family Members of the Diplomatic, Consular and Administrative Personnel of Diplomatic Missions <i>(Valid till denounced by either party)</i>	2016
21	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Trade Industry and Tourism of the Republic of Colombia on Cooperation in Tourism Development <i>(Validity 5 years/automatic renewal)</i>	4 October 2018
22	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy of the Republic of India, and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Colombia, regarding Cooperation on Traditional Systems of Medicine of India <i>(Validity 4 years/automatic renewal)</i>	4 October 2018

23	Joint Interpretative Declaration between the Republic of India and the Republic of Colombia regarding the agreement for the promotion and protection of investments between India and Colombia	10 November 2009
24	MoU between Electronics and Computer Software Export promotion Council (ESC), India and Colombian Federation of Software and IT Industry (FEDESOFI) <i>(Valid till termination)</i>	September 2018