Guatemala: Enticing investors

More than seven decades of excellent political and trade relations between Guatemala and Japan were further reinforced by the recent visit of President Álvaro Colom to Tokyo. During his successful trip, President Colom met with government officials and business leaders and highlighted his country’s outstanding investment opportunities.

President Colom is a successful businessman who got into politics and took office in January 2008. Prior to his political career, Colom owned a successful business that allowed him to invest in companies and provide technical support. Under his leadership, Guatemala has become a key player in the world economy, with a strong focus on trade and investment.

During his visit to Tokyo, President Colom met with representatives of Nippon Keidanren, a business organization representing nearly 3,000 companies, around 326 subnational and regional economic organizations. He invited them to explore the wealth of business opportunities in Guatemala, its agricultural, renewable energy, tourism, and waste management sectors.

President Colom said he was particularly interested in utilizing Guatemala’s technology that increases the yield of 15 percent of aluminum and 24 percent of paper. He also emphasized the need for foreign investment to support the country’s economy. He said that “Guatemala has a very agile investment mechanism that can perfectly handle large investments.”

President Colom visited Japan last year, and both countries are planning to expand their bilateral relations. Japan is already the country’s second most important export market for coffee, and the President’s trip to Japan will further strengthen business ties between the two countries.

Several agreements were signed during President Colom’s visit, including a loan agreement that will see Guatemala receive $28 million from Japan to fund various projects. Additionally, a significant number of international companies are planning to invest in Guatemala, including Japanese firms.

Guatemala has made significant progress in recent years, with a focus on improving infrastructure, increasing investment, and promoting sustainable development. The country is known for its beautiful natural landscapes, rich biodiversity, and vibrant culture.

Guatemala is an attractive destination for investors due to its strategic location, natural resources, and political stability. The country’s economy is growing, with a focus on agriculture, tourism, and renewable energy. The government has implemented policies to attract foreign investment, including tax incentives and streamlined regulatory processes.

President Colom is keen to further strengthen bilateral relations between Guatemala and Japan, and he hopes that this visit will lead to more investments in the country.

The visit also allows for a broader discussion on the potential for economic cooperation in various sectors, including agriculture, renewable energy, and tourism. President Colom is confident that this visit will pave the way for more business opportunities between Guatemala and Japan.

President Colom said that “Guatemala offers the best level of aid.”

The visit of President Colom to Japan will be remembered as a significant step towards further强化ing the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

Our meeting today has further strengthened relations between our two countries.

Guatemala offers the best level of aid.
Driving social development

President Álvaro Colom and First Lady Sandra Torres de Colom are spearheading their country’s social development through a range of health, education and welfare projects.

In addition to political, economic and social stability, Guatemala has made strong progress in the fight against poverty in recent years thanks to the help and financial support of international aid partners such as Japan.

Since the signing of a peace accord in 1996 that ended the 36-year civil war, Guatemala has worked hard to rebuild its institutions, economy and society, and improve health and education services.

The country has developed hundreds of millions of dollars in aid and equipment to the Central American country. ‘Our children now receive a better education than ever before. My government has created 5,100 new centers of education for young people.’

Álvaro Colom, President of Guatemala

In addition to the demands of government agencies and organizations to manage projects and programs, both President Colom and First Lady regularly travel to remote areas to see for themselves how their humanitarian efforts are making a difference to people.

Social Cohesion Council
At the forefront of this drive to raise social, health and education standards is the Social Cohesion Council (Consejo de Cohesión Social). The brainchild of President Colom, the visionary-building organization is highly active throughout the country and raises awareness on health, education and social projects.

During his speech to world leaders at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Sept. 20, President Colom highlighted the benefits of aid and the need for the world to work together.

“Guatemala’s education system is improving and depend- ing on international partners to provide a better education than ever before,” said Colom during a speech to leaders in September.

Long-term goals
In addition to the immediate benefits, a delighted President Colom con- firmed: “We will give to the least fortunate the hope that these efforts will, in time, transform the lives of our most vulnerable citizens.

Four out of every 100 young people are currently in a position to participate in under- graduate courses, but officials are determined to increase this figure in the short, medium and long term.

The measures also reveal a clear political commitment to education in Guatemala and are expected to provide a very positive impact on educational outcomes.

‘Guatemala’s many social programs do not just meet the interests, they only see the people and the needs.’

Sandra Torres de Colom, First Lady of Guatemala

According to a recent forecast by the Demographic Research Center of Latin America, Guatemala will have the largest number of inhabitants in the region by the middle of the century. When combined with advances in communications and information tech- nology (ICT), these rich human resources have helped Guatemala build a world-class reputation as a provider of call centers and BPO services.

Competitive labor, high industry standards, hard- working, bilingual and confident staff are all contributing to make Guatemala one of the most popular destinations for Latin America, while also propelling it toward first place on one of the most popular destination lists.

‘Guatemala is a beautiful, friendly and welcoming country that offers visitors from Japan and around the world a wealth of natural, historical and cultural attractions all year round.’

Álvaro Colom, President of Guatemala

The country has a strong indigenous presence where ancient customs and traditions are passed down and preserved. The colonial past retains an im- portant presence as a cultural heritage, as illustrated by the attractive and historic city of Antigua Guatemala.

Strategic location
Guanacaste’s strategic location at the heart of the American and Pacific oceans will make Guatemala a popular port of call for cruise liners. Each year thousands of passengers experience its many natural, cultural and historical attractions.

According to government statistics, the country welcomed more than 1.8 million visitors in 2009. Visitors to the coastal city of Guatemala accounted for 54.5 percent of the total, followed closely by visitors from the country’s interior, 26.8 percent.

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