Two nations revitalize cooperation

In their 105th anniversary, relations between Colombia and Japan have assumed a higher profile over the last few years with high-level trips by officials from both countries, including a state visit to Tokyo by President Ivan Duque in 2017. In September 2019, Colombia and Japan signed the Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investment, the first step in continuing efforts to expand the coverage of their economic relations. The two sides have also completed two rounds of negotiations in finalizing the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), with a third round in Tokyo planned soon.

"Regarding the EPA, we are seeking a positive impact on our economic relations. The National Planning Department prepared a study on the impact of various trade agreements on the country. The study concluded that a trade agreement with Japan will add another 0.16 percentage point to Colombia's GDP," said President Duque.

Japanese Ambassador to Colombia Kazuki Watanabe agreed: "There is a very important potential for Japan if Colombia can conclude the EPA with Colombia, it would indeed be a win-win situation.

On the past two decades, Colombia's leaders have persisted in bringing its economy's troubled history, shedding its deeply rooted economic and social problems.

Today, it looks like its economic growth has peaked off, with many observers noting that the favorable terms of prospective foreign investors have been addressed.

Since 2002, beginning with former President Álvaro Uribe, the government under the current administration of President Duque has pursued an agenda of concentrated development, a strategy that has been supported by Japan.

"Colombia represents a very good investment opportunity not only in upstream oil and gas, but also in infrastructure," said Ambassador Watanabe. "Japan can bring quite a bit to the table in infrastructural projects," said Canaco Energy President and CEO Chávez Guzmán.

"We can use the expertise of the Japanese in infrastructural development. Colombia has one of the finest infrastructures in the world. We can take advantage of Japan’s extraordinary knowledge and know-how in this field," stressed FAM Group President Carlos Gallego Aranguren Fabrega.

"Because of Colombia's budding infrastructural development, the government of Japan can announce a list of leading projects in need of investment. There is a growing expectation for infrastructural investment over the next ten years. We should be seeing incrementally larger projects coming downstream. There is a lot of catching up to do," noted Juan Pablo Cordoba, the president of the Colombia-Singapore Business Exchange.

"The opportunity is here in Colombia. We have made a lot of progress here, which has been unnoticed by Japan.

"The Japanese government and the private sector have an interest in infrastructure development here in Colombia. This is a vast country with three chains of mountains, making transport difficult, particularly between the east and west of the country. The Japanese government and private sector can contribute to improving the infrastructural development in Colombia," said Ambassador Watanabe.

Colombia's leader in entertainment

In 2009, Sony set up a direct subsidiary in Bogota, recognizing the immense potential held by the thriving Colombian economy. Amid a rapid expansion of the region's middle-class, the Japanese electronics giant has already established it as one of its 10 "global focus zones," with Colombia playing a vital role in the company's business development.

"We think that the Colombian market has great potential for our industry. Population-wise, Colombia is the third-largest in Latin America, behind Brazil and Mexico. Demographically-wise, almost half of the population is below 25 years old. Colombia is a very young market. This is a golden opportunity to share in the region's growth," said Sony Colombia President Takashi Kawano.

Colombia has achieved impressive results in brand awareness and market position. By being in the country, it can identify trends early, quickly adapt to its local market and then promptly deliver its products. "We are excited to be able to offer the latest products adapted to the local market's needs," said Kawano.

Japanese electronics giant Sony has introduced more of its latest products this year, including the Sony Bravia with Triluminos display, which expands the screen’s color spectrum.

Outside the TV segment, Sony has emerged as the market leader in audio component systems. It has also sold over 500,000 of its latest products this year, including the Sony Bravia with DVB-T2, the world’s first manufacturer to offer the Sony Bravia with DVB-T2. This is one of the achievements that we could not have achieved if we were not here in Colombia. Thanks to our presence, we are able to offer the latest products adapted to the local market’s needs," said Kawano.

"In the future, we are looking at the convergence of all categories. We want to promote the convergence of all Sony products with each other. We have a technology called One Touch, which creates an ecosystem where consumers can fully experience all the entertainment offerings offered by Sony. Our priority is to continue offering the best experience to the consumer, whether it be entertainment, such as movies, music, gaming and even content creation. We will keep offering this kind of experience," said Kawano.

"First and foremost, we are an entertainment company. We cover the entire spectrum of entertainment, from software to hardware and content. Customer loyalty makes us re- sponsible in creating new experiences for them and ushering them into the convergence age. We do not offer merely products, we offer a full experience," added Kawano.

*www.sony.com*
A perfect collaboration

A partnership dating back nearly four decades, the joint venture between OKI and Toyota, and Yamaha Motors Corp. is among the oldest and most successful alliances, capable of the successes that can be achieved between two companies.

Between 1983 and 2019, Yamaha Motors is steadily increasing its participation in the joint venture from the original 21 percent to the present 50 percent currently.

Today, with Yamaha's powertrain, vehicle body parts and Yamaha Motors motorcycles, and Toyota, with its expertise in assembly and marketing, this partnership is showing no signs of slowing down.

With eight active fields — producing between 15,000 and 20,000 barrels of oil and gas a day. Canacol Energy has shown a general slump in sales, but the company is still looking for partners that can help it overcome this challenge.

Gerleinco welcomes more Japanese investments

Founded in 1916, Gerleinco is the oldest and largest maritime agent company in Colombia, and has moved into full range logistics services, with a special focus on the country’s booming energy sector.

A partner of Mitsubishi OSK Lines (MOL) for 37 years, Gerleinco is committed to this long-standing relationship and its steadfast adherence to Japanese values.

“We have a very active relationship with MOL, so we know Japanese culture. During all these years, we’ve learned from them. We’ve formed and strengthened our business, and they’re our friends.”

“Our Japanese operation is very busy, it’s a world-class operation. We have a very good relationship, we work closely together.”

Canacol Energy charts the route to prosperity

Opening for only five years, Canacol Energy has avoided production peaks and periods of high production to gain access to the country’s oil reserves. Aiming to last, the company has a well-documented history in the largest oil and gas projects in the world.

Canacol Energy President and CEO Charlie Garth said.

“Nowadays, maritime transportation is a highly globalized concept. The system is based on very big tankers. These large carriers obviously can’t cover every port. This is where medium services come into play. This is where we, as small investors, are looking to contribute. If a shipping line wants to adopt the global picture, they must have a foot in Japan.”

The company has shown a steady growth since its establishment in 1991, and has continued to attract the attention of major players in the industry, including Chevron and Petroleo.

FAM Group was established in 1991 as one industry veteran, recognizing the importance of its presence in the country even in a very short time.

“While the automotive market has shown a general slump in sales, Distoyota has not only held on to its top position, but also boosted its sales.”

“Forty-six years of working with Toyota has taught me that, in the car industry, there is no better associate than a Japanese car manufacturer, like Toyota.”

Canacol Energy

“While the automotive market has shown a general slump in sales, Distoyota has not only held on to its top position, but also boosted its sales.”

The company is committed to the Japanese market and has shown resilience in the face of challenges, including the effects of the toyota views on business in the country.

“With the entry of other companies, the market has shown a general slump in sales, but Distoyota has not only held on to its top position, but also boosted its sales.”

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