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LA MANERA MAS FACIL DE HACER NEGOCIOS

Pacific echo

Opinion

The Working Committee on Food Products is one of the most active, accomplished and important PBEC Working Committees.

It is important not only to maintain the support it has received to date but to increase it in view of the challenges that lie ahead. World population will exceed 8 billion by the year 2020; today over 800 people suffer chronic malnutrition and the annual population growth rate is 90 million people.

It is therefore necessary to produce quality and quantity food, at favorable prices, to meet the demand of a rapidly growing population. This must be done in an environmentally friendly way, without destroying forests, polluting the soil and water, or degrading our planet's biodiversity.

We must increase the use of technology to improve productivity at better prices; and it is here where developing countries offer the best opportunities for growth.

The work done in this regard by Ray Cesca from inside the Working Committee on Food Products, has been excellent, worthy of applause and praise. His extraordinary experience and knowledge make him the ideal person to preside the Committee.

Thanks to Ray Cesca's enthusiasm, attention and cooperation, we have

undertaken new projects, organized forums and programs that have proven to be very useful for Colombian entrepreneurs. He knows first hand that our country offers great business opportunities thanks to our fertile lands, waterways, and unbelievable biodiversity, but most of all, to the quality of our people. All our country needs is foreign investment to finance machinery, equipment, working capital and technology.

PBEC has always counted and will continue counting on the willingness and support of the Colombian Committee to help attain any goal that benefits the region's business development.

Jaime Mantilla
Chairman



Jaime Mantilla, PBEC Colombia Chairman; Rodrigo Villalba, Minister of Agriculture of Colombia; Ray Cesca, PBEC Working Committee on Food Products Chairman.

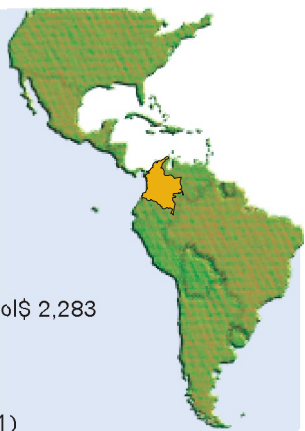
Colombia: palm oil export potential

For purposes of enhancing Colombia's Palm Oil export potential, an official mission of Malaysian entrepreneurs and public officials visited the country last March. The Minister of Foreign Trade, Ms. Angela María Orozco, informed the delegation that Colombia is in the position to offer Malaysian investors all the tax and fiscal guarantees that will enable them to make the best of Colombia's strategic location, gaining access to free trade agreements, thus increasing their market share in Latin America.

In the opinion of Datuk Anifah Aman, Vice Minister of Primary Industries of Malaysia, Colombia is the strategic location for projecting to the United States and Europe, thanks to its location; in this regard, the Malaysian government agreed to enter into a purchase and sale agreement of 1.3 million palm oil seeds with the National Federation of Palm Oil Growers - Fedepalma.

Important facts about Colombia

President: Andrés Pastrana Arango
Area: 1,138,914 km²
Population: 42.38 million inhabitants
Capital city: Bogotá
Official Language: Spanish
Currency: Colombian Peso. US\$ 1 = Col\$ 2,283
GDP per capita: US\$1,849 (2000)
Inflation: 7.6% (2002)
Oil Production (barrels): 710,000
Balance of trade: US\$300 million (2001)
Direct Foreign Investment: US\$2.6 billion
Potential sectors for investment: Soft drinks, Chemicals, Clothing and Apparel, Construction, Construction Materials, Consumer Goods, Appliances, Shoes, Food, Glass, Iron and Steel, Leather and Accessories, Metallurgy, Paint, Cardboard and Paper, Petrochemical, Pharmaceutical, Plastic, Printing, Rubber, Textiles and Lumber, among others.



Reasons for investing in Colombia

Strategic location in the Americas. Colombia is the path that joins North and South America. Its coastline borders two oceans: 1,600 kilometers of coastline on the Atlantic and 1,300 km. of coastland along the Pacific Ocean. This privileged position makes Colombia the natural gateway to South America and the door to Europe, North America and the Pacific Basin.

Multiple regional development poles. Colombia has numerous regional development areas. Colombia is organized as a decentralized republic, divided into thirty-two geographical departments, grouped into five regions characterized each one by having clear differences determined by their geographic location, activities and customs.

Medium-sized market with growing purchasing power. From the demographic standpoint, Colombia is the most populated country in the Andean Community and ranks third in Latin America after Brazil and Mexico. Its present population stands at 43 million, comprised mostly of young people. As of fact, over 90% of the population is under the age of 50.

Infrastructure and standard of living. Colombia ranks among the top three in terms of telephone availability; it ranks first as the country having the highest number of fax machines per 1,000 inhabitants, and the highest number of Internet servers per 10,000 people in the Andean Zone. Colombia has the highest basic public utility coverage in Latin America.

The human capital. Colombia's biggest strength. Colombian labor is deemed to be the best in the Andean Community and one of the most skilled labor in Latin America; Colombia has one of the lowest adult illiteracy rates.

Source: www.coinvertir.com

McDonald's believes in Colombia

Great enthusiasm and the desire to increase Colombian exports to Latin America, have lead McDonald's to become a clear example of confidence in Colombian entrepreneurs. Thanks to his resolute commitment to position Colombia as a possible region, Pedro Medina, McDonald's CEO in Colombia, has enabled his vendors in Colombia to reach other markets in the region, for example by:

- Exporting 18 tons of lettuce a week to Venezuela.
- Exporting 10 million pounds of coffee a year to the United States.

Basin Echoes

- ▶ The PBEC Working Committee on Food Products will participate actively in the First Colombian Biotechnology Congress to be held in Bogotá in July of this year. The meeting will examine Biotechnology development in the region in areas such as research, innovation and public sector participation, and convey the experience of international agencies such as PBEC in the industrialization of Biotechnology.
- ▶ Within the framework of the International Industrial Fair of Bogotá, the most important industrial event in Latin America, the Colombian PBEC Committee will organize the First Pacific Basin Showroom, with the purpose of enhancing business ties with the economies of the region. Representatives from countries such as Chile, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Ecuador and Peru will be present to promote trade with our country and other strategies for the internationalization of their goods and services. We encourage Chairman and Directors of PBEC Member Committees to promote this event within its affiliates.

Basin and biotechnology

The Colombian PBEC Committee attended the Forum "APEC and Biotechnology: Communication and Cooperation", last February in Mexico City, thanks to the kind invitation extended to it by the PBEC Working Committee on Food Products, with the purpose of sharing Colombian experiences in this field and assess the implementation of, and opportunities for, Biotechnology in the Pacific Basin. We were represented in that occasion by Dr. Álvaro Gaitán, PhD, scientist of the National Center for Coffee Research CENICAFÉ, and Dr. Gustavo Buitrago, PhD, Founder of the Instituto Nacional de Biotecnología de Colombia (Biotechnology National Institute of Colombia). Certainly many interesting and strategic alliances will emerge from this meeting that will benefit Biotechnology in the region.

"...Colombia is not interested in releasing transgenic coffee varieties any time in the near future, not just because of this crop's harvest time, but rather because of the importance attached to public acceptance of such kind of products in the world market".

Alvaro Gaitan, PhD, February 2002, Mexico.
 APEC & Biotechnology Forum

The world is our market

Thanks to the success in Bogotá last April, the Colombian PBEC Committee, with the support of the Chambers of Commerce of Medellín, organized the Forum "China and Indonesia: Great Business Opportunities for Colombia" in that city. Embassy officials from both countries attended the meeting. Participants took a close look at the business opportunities offered by these two Asia Pacific countries to Colombian entrepreneurs and the national government's strategy in this field. Over 200 entrepreneurs attended these forum, making of it an ideal platform for promoting, in other cities besides Bogotá, trade between Colombia and Pacific Basin countries.

- Exporting 88 million cups and caps a year.
- 600 employees manufacturing uniforms for 4 countries in Latin America.

McDonald's will invest US\$75 million in the course of the next 3 years in Colombia and will create over 2,000 new jobs, in order to continue with its world record of restaurant openings in our country (10 in the first 12 months).