



WEDNESDAY JULY 21, 2021  
SPECIAL PUBLICATION



**211**  
YEARS OF  
INDEPENDENCE

**COLOMBIA**  
NATIONAL DAY



# MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

## H.E. CLAUDIA TURBAY QUINTERO

Once again, its July 20th, a day on which we celebrate this year, 211 years of Colombia's independence. Our country has built a path of progress, inspired by the values of freedom, independence, democracy, inclusion, joy, the well-being of our people, love of nature, and resilience. It is in short, a testament to Colombians' respect for life and a constant improvement through the continued work of our people.

As we celebrate our National Day once again here in Ghana and West Africa, it is important to express on behalf of the President of Colombia, H.E. Iván Duque Márquez, and the Embassy of Colombia to West Africa established in Ghana, the significance that this opening of this sub region of the African continent, as well of course, as the whole of the African continent has for Colombia.

It has allowed us to find many ways of integration, and to continue seeking to accomplish the already highlighted common objectives, exercising the vocation of integration that Colombia has, through economic and cultural integration, to advance in our social development, and strengthening our democratic values among ordinary citizens, thus making it the beacon of our development, to work together for sustainability.

While we celebrate these 211 years of our independence, we cannot leave out the wish that we Colombians have, to achieve the release from captivity of a dear citizen Sr. Gloria Narváez, a Catholic nun who has been kidnapped in Mali since 2017. This is the aspiration of the Colombian government and all Colombian citizens, and I am sure that many of the people of the sub region accompany us in this search.

At the same time, we all have the common objective of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We coincide in our vision to develop each and every one of these goals: among them, elimination of poverty and hunger, promoting health and well-being, decent work, environment sustainability, equality in gender, promoting clean energy and cities, for which we remain united in our cooperation activities. Let us take on the role of defenders of human values in relation to ourselves and the world around us living together in peace and progress.

Thank you to Ghana for the hospitality you give us, and thank you to the countries of West Africa, with whom we wish to continue advancing in both bilateral and multilateral actions.

Every year we find reasons to share with our friends, partners, and the international community our progress, challenges, achievements, and commitments.

### Our Economy

This particular year, we share with the world several challenges, such as achieving our economic recovery. Before COVID-19 hit the world, affecting the world economy, our growth was between 6-8%. In order to reach that level of growth once again, we are implementing a series of initiatives directed to recover the country in a short period of time, where we are especially concerned with helping reactivate sectors that can help those most affected by the pandemic, those that were most vulnerable to its negative side effects.

This will be possible thanks to the

Government of His Excellency, the President of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez, who has been taking measures to create a climate of growth. When it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic, our government is focusing efforts in reaching herd immunity. Out of about 50 million inhabitants, 21 million have already been vaccinated, we are on the path to achieve our goal.

- Ending the lockdown will allow factories to be reopened and employment will be reactivated, transportation and exports will recover at full speed, and the vulnerable population of Colombia will be supported not only by the government but also by the private sector, that has decided to take measures to contribute to this transition.
- We trust that in the very near future, economic indicators will be pointing upwards as a good result of this policy. Already, the Economic Commission of Latin America (CEPAL), has projected a GDP growth for Colombia above the regional average. Thirty-three countries of the region were subjects of this study.

### Innovation and technology

- We have also seen how Colombia and the Unicorn Hunters joined forces to boost Colombian entrepreneurship by signing a strategic alliance for high potential Colombian companies to have more access and a more competitive advantage in international markets. Already, Colombia has started working towards attracting more and new economic investment in some of the traditional markets of our country.
- These efforts are accompanied by innovation and technological projects that are the result of the consolidated national commitment to create technological projects through young



H.E. Iván Duque Márquez, President of Colombia

programmers. We are now exploring the video game and digital content industry, to make headway into the Asian market. In fact, we will soon start distributing "Aniquilación" and "Cell Scientists" two Colombian video games in South Korea and China.

### Tourism

- In this month of July, Colombia has invited 6 South American countries to the Tourism Convention to cover both business appointments between Colombian business sector and other South American companies, there will be

approximately 874 business meetings and several academic meetings with experts and government officials to explore the progress of Colombia.

### International Cooperation

- In 2020, Colombia became the 37th member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As a result, public institutions in Colombia will meet international standards of the developed world. Being part of the OECD provides greater legal security and strengthens the country's confidence to attract foreign investment and contributes to deepen bilateral economic ties.

### The Job Market

- Colombia was on a trend to reducing the inequality rate of the country which is again a big challenge because of rising poverty levels in the country. Colombia has been ranked as the country in Latin America with the 3rd best labor force, beating countries such as Chile, Peru, Brazil and Venezuela. The latest tax reform (Act 1607 of 2012) led to the reduction of certain job-related costs from 52% to 38.5%.
- There is another condition that we have, which is our geographical location, that gives us easy access to markets around the world. We have 25 international airlines in the country and connect directly to 15 international destinations worldwide. In 2019, tourism was the second largest foreign exchange earner, surpassing traditional products such as coffee, flowers and banana and we expect it to make a stronger comeback.

### International Trade

- Colombia has more than 17 trade agreements in force, enabling preferential

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# MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

H.E. CLAUDIA TURBAY QUINTERO

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access to more than 60 countries and nearly 1,500 million consumers across markets including the United States, the European Union, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Costa Rica, South Korea, and Israel; with new markets to be added soon, like Panama and United Kingdom, with which Colombia has signed agreements. Additionally, Colombia is negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with Japan and an associate state figure through the Pacific Alliance with Canada, Australia, Singapore and New Zealand. An important fact is that Ghana is the only country where the four member countries of the Alliance are present together since 2018.

- Colombia has 16 International Investment Agreements in force and 11 Double Taxation Agreements in force with major trading partners to ensure a stable and favorable legal framework for foreign investment. It is important to remember that Colombia is connected to Ghana and Africa, through the Atlantic Ocean and we are working to establish economic partnerships with Africa and in the specific case of the Embassy of a Colombia in Ghana, with Ghana and West Africa.
- What we can clearly observe is that already, many measures and commitments are part of the economic reactivations of our country. Our country is not only incentivizing through traditional production but also through science, technology, investment and environmental sustainability.

## Migration and Peace-building

- President Iván Duque Márquez has emphasized from the beginning of his government, Development with legality and Peace with legality, fundamentally based on our Constitution, which is our legal framework. In addition to many other challenges, Colombia has had to confront a strong wave of immigration from its neighbouring country Venezuela, i.e. Around 1.8 million Venezuelan citizens have migrated to Colombia. As a demonstration of support to the difficulties this community faces, the government created the Temporary Statute for the Protection of Migrants to regularize their situation.
- Incidentally, that condition of irregularity not only affects the migrants but also the country, for which the corresponding registration of each of the migrants is required and will allow them to receive the benefits contemplated within this statute, to grant them temporary protection permits for 10 years. This seeks to protect their human rights and in turn, reduce the number of current and future irregular migration and rather promote regular migration.
- Since May of this year, the registration process for approximately 25% of migrants has begun and registration will be enabled until May 28, 2022, for those who entered the country before January 1, 2021. For those who entered after that date with the passport stamped, they will have until November 24, 2023. After this period, they will have to apply for a visa.

# #YOALZO #MIBANDERA

## Territorial Development

- President Duque's Government has led the implementation of the Reintegration into Civility- Territorial Development Plan (PDET), as a fundamental part of the peace agreement. This plan is part of an effort to achieve the implementation of the peace agreement within a framework of legality, to support the re-incorporation of ex-combatants, illegal crop substitution and development programs with a territorial focus.
- I wish to highlight some comments of the Secretary General of the United Nations on this peace process with legality, during the verification mission in Colombia on July 2, 2021, in which two important issues are mentioned:
  - i. That most of the ex-combatants remained committed to rejoining the social and political life of the country and also highlighted the fact of the progress recorded in peace with legality after the meeting with President Iván Duque and Rodrigo Londoño, who was known as Timochenko, leader of the FARC Guerilla.
  - ii. It is also important to note that disputes between illegal armed actors to achieve social and territorial control, affect communities' rights, human rights activists, social leaders, and ex-combatants, which explains why when the peace agreement was signed in the midst of these violent situations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the People's Army (EP), these illegal armed encounters and their effects on complying with the peace agreement were not contemplated.

## Women in Peace

- Women are the protagonists of the peace process in social investment and rural sector transformation programs. Today, we have more than a million women who benefit from formalization programs, and access to rural housing. There are also more than 35,000 women heads of households, who make decisions such as replacing coca cultivation with cocoa - which I call the Grain of Peace-, coffee and aromatic plants, ensuring their tranquility and a legal and sustainable income over time. This is part of the PDET.
- The Colombian government is working with commitment to the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, towards ending extreme poverty, having 100% of our population with social security and continuing to strengthen the education sector as a national priority, along with health. It is well known that without education and

without employment, a dignified life for all citizens and the promotion of human rights cannot be properly guaranteed.

## Colombia's Pact with Youth

- One of the most important achievements of this Government is the Colombian Pact with Youth, in which young people in Colombia are assisted to gain access to higher education institutions at zero cost, where credit lines are being generated for housing for young people and employment, and where the government is also promoting the generation of employment for young people by sponsoring a percentage of the minimum wage to employer companies.
- Training slots have been opened for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics education (STEAM) training programs for children under 18. Similarly, the training of creative industries and bilingualism is being promoted. This pact is mainly benefiting the poorest in Colombia's social and economic structure.
- The government of President Duque is a government that permanently defends democracy, rule of law and human rights, with a focus on security and protection of the life of citizens, and integral development that allows to dignify the living conditions of its People.
- I cannot end this message without making clarifying comments on the situation that Colombia has been facing since the 28th of April due to an atypical situation. I am referring to a series of protests that have developed with violent activities and vandalism. Colombia insists that the right

to peaceful demonstration is a legal right, but the State has to act when it comes to the defense of national security, and when it comes to other citizens.

- Colombia protects the rights of all people, those who protest and those who do not, equally. Clearly, however, this event has led to our President inviting the new Legislature that will be elected next August, to begin to work on a new law against vandalism and riots. It was also observed that it is necessary to define the demands that are made of the representatives of the institutions of the nation, such as the National Police, and that the citizens have the right to peaceful demonstration, without attacking the country's institutional integrity, nor those who defend the rights of citizens. Therefore, the right to protest must be without violence, vandalism, or riots since protests cannot and do not seek to affect collective rights.
- Finally, as I end my message, I wish to invite readers to accompany us in our celebration by joining The Great National Concert dubbed, 'Colombia, a love that unites us' on July 20th. With a production of high artistic and audiovisual quality, the Great National Concert will be a trip through various regions of the country and through the rich cultural diversity of Colombia. It is a digital event that will begin at 7:30 p.m. Colombian time. The event will be transmitted live through the social networks of the Ministry of Culture, <https://mincultura.gov.co/Paginas/default.aspx>, the Teatro Colón, <https://teatrocolon.gov.co/>, Caracol TV, the Public Media System (RTVC), regional channels, channels identified by the Embassies of Colombia and allied media.

## The best of Colombia in a new Disney Production

- I also want to share with you a beautiful Disney production which will be released in November, which shows the magic of Colombia. Within this context, we find in the various manifestations of art, a channel of communication that reflects the values of Colombian culture, fundamentally the human warmth of our people and the richness exemplified in diversity; therefore, this July 20 is the perfect occasion, to share through the following link: <https://youtu.be/MwY5Upn61FI> a preview of the new exciting film from Walt Disney Animation Studios, called 'Encanto' which, for illustrative purposes, highlights the qualities that make Colombia an attractive and captivating country where you can see a fantastic natural paradise inspired by the coffee region that promises to show the magic of our land.



H.E. CLAUDIA TURBAY QUINTERO, Colombia's Ambassador to Ghana



# ABOUT COLOMBIA

## THE STORY OF 20TH JULY

**20 DE JULIO**  
DÍA DE LA INDEPENDENCIA  
DE COLOMBIA

#IndependenciaCol



Imagin: Simón Bolívar - Crea: Quilón de Bolívar

July 20 is the day that symbolizes the independence of Colombia from Spanish colonization, so this date is the most important patriotic celebration of the country. Although it is thought that this was the beginning of the independence campaign, the truth is that it is part of a

process that began in the late eighteenth century and ended with the dissolution of the Gran Colombia in 1830.

In 1808, with the usurpation of the throne of King Ferdinand VII by the Napoleonic empire and the power

vacuum that this generated in the Latin American colonies, a feeling of self-government began to emerge in the Creoles that was radicalized when the Cortes of Cadiz did not recognize that autonomy.

Later, with the revolution of 1909 - which ended with the declaration of Quito as an autonomous province - a feeling of independence was fostered in the other colonies that materialized with the call for open councils, the formation of government boards and the proclamation of the autonomy of the provinces. The first city to declare its autonomy in this process was Cartagena, on May 22, 1810; which was followed by Cali on July 3 and El Socorro on July 10, to end with the famous July 20. (National University, 2010).

From 1830, when Gran Colombia was dissolved, and the physical borders of what is now the political map of northern South America began to consolidate, almost as we know it today, Colombia began its work of creating nationalist icons, among them the designation of July 20 as the day of national independence.

Source:

<https://mincultura.gov.co/areas/poblacion/s/commemoraciones/Paginas/20-de-Julio-D%C3%ADa-de-la-Independencia-de-Colombia.aspx>

### BIODIVERSITY IN COLOMBIA

Colombia is the second most biodiverse country in the world, with natural and cultural landscapes; including the Amazon. The astounding diversity of landscapes, the white-capped mountains of the Andes, mangroves along the Pacific Coast, vast stretches of the Caribbean Sea, the open savanna of the Orinoco River basin, makes it one of the countries with the greatest biological diversity on the planet.

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