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BILATERAL RELATIONS
INDIA - COLOMBIA

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INTRODUCTION

India and Colombia established diplomatic relations on 19 January 1959, marking over **67 years of robust bilateral ties**. Colombia opened its Embassy in New Delhi in March 1972, followed by India opening its Embassy in Bogotá in 1973. The institutional architecture has expanded significantly; Colombia has appointed Honorary Consuls in Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Kolkata, while India maintains an Honorary Consul in Barranquilla.

The two nations enjoy friendly and cordial relations that have diversified into political, commercial, technological, and cultural domains. The **Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) mechanism**, established in 1995, continues to serve as the core framework for reviewing bilateral ties. The relationship has grown dynamically, with the 10th round of the FOC successfully held in New Delhi in October 2024 to map out cooperation in defense, renewable energy, and digital public infrastructure.

High-level political and institutional engagement has accelerated remarkably. Following the historic official visit of India’s External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Colombia in April 2023, subsequent high-level engagements —including the bilateral meeting at the January 2024 NAM Summit and the official visit of India's Secretary (East) to Bogotá in August 2025—have further solidified strategic ties. These exchanges, paired with cultural milestones like India serving as the Guest of Honour at the 2026 Bogotá International Book Fair, underscore a rapidly deepening partnership in the Global South.



HISTORY

India and Colombia established diplomatic relations on 19 January 1959, laying the foundation for formal bilateral engagement between the two countries. Diplomatic relations gradually developed through political contacts and institutional mechanisms. Colombia opened its Embassy in New Delhi in March 1972, followed by India establishing its resident Embassy in Bogotá in 1973, strengthening the permanent diplomatic footprint of both nations.

During the following decades, India and Colombia developed cordial relations and expanded cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The two countries established the Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) mechanism in 1995, providing a regular platform for reviewing bilateral relations and exchanging views on regional and international developments. This mechanism became an important channel for maintaining structural political dialogue.

Bilateral engagement expanded further through ministerial and high-level exchanges. Colombia's Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs visited India in late 2021, while India's Minister of State for External Affairs also visited Colombia during the same period. These visits provided crucial opportunities to align cooperation in sectors including health, science and technology, and pharmacy.

A significant milestone came with the official visit of External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Colombia from 25–27 April 2023. It marked the first-ever visit to Colombia by an Indian External Affairs Minister. During the historic visit, high-level discussions were held with Colombian leaders on broadening economic partnerships, reinforcing political ties, and boosting South-South cooperation.

In recent years, the relationship has rapidly diversified into digital transformation, information technologies, renewable energy, and culture. The 10th round of India–Colombia Foreign Office Consultations was successfully held in New Delhi on 15 October 2024. A landmark outcome of this round was the signing of a bilateral Audio-Visual Co-production Agreement, facilitating joint resources and deeper people-to-people connections in media and entertainment.

Ultimately, the history of India–Colombia relations reflects a strategic transition from foundational ties in 1959 to a highly diversified modern partnership. Continuous diplomatic consultations, high-level exchanges, and a shared vision in technological and economic fields have secured a steady, upward trajectory for bilateral relations.

COMMERCIAL TIES



India and Colombia enjoy steadily expanding commercial relations, with bilateral trade spanning a wide array of sectors. Trade initially peaked at US$4 billion in 2014, driven by Indian crude oil imports. Following a slump in 2015–16 due to falling oil prices, trade recovered robustly, growing from US$1.85 billion in FY 2019–20 to approximately US$4.7 billion by the 2025–26 cycle, positioning India among Colombia's top 10 trading partners.

The trade composition reflects key economic complementarities. India’s main exports to Colombia include two- and three-wheelers, automobiles, telecom instruments, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals. Notably, Colombia is the second-largest global market for Indian motorcycles. Conversely, Colombia’s exports to India are dominated by crude petroleum, coal, gold, emeralds, and wood, resulting in a trade surplus for Colombia due to India’s high energy demand.

Investment is a vital pillar of the relationship, with total Indian investment in Colombia surpassing US$1 billion. This footprint spans hydrocarbons—led by ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL)—as well as manufacturing, IT, and pharma hubs maintained by firms like Bajaj, Hero MotoCorp, and Zoho. In contrast, Colombian investment in India remains modest at around US$5 million.

To sustain this momentum, both nations regularly drive direct engagement through Buyer-Seller Meets (BSMs), business delegations, and targeted trade promotion activities.

MILITARY RELATIONS



India and Colombia have steadily developed defense cooperation through structured institutional mechanisms and professional exchanges between their armed forces. The foundation of this partnership was laid with the signing of a bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement in February 2009, which established the Joint Defence Committee (JDC) to facilitate ongoing dialogue on matters of mutual interest.

Early defense exchanges focused on institutional capacity and site visits, including study tours by Colombian artillery officers to India's Gun Carriage Factory and participation by the Colombian Air Force leadership in the Aero India exhibition. Delegations from India's National Defence College (NDC) visited Colombia in 2012 and 2017, further strengthening high-level professional interactions.
In recent years, the security partnership has evolved from standard professional exchanges to targeted collaboration in counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, and advanced technology. Building upon joint bilateral defense ministry conferences, Colombia actively collaborates with India for capacity-building programs, including training support from India's Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi.

The relationship took a major technological stride as Colombia sought deeper law-enforcement and defense-industrial ties with India. The Colombian government entered advanced discussions with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to procure India's indigenous drone shield technology to counter aerial threats from transnational drug cartels. To sustain this modern security architecture, Colombia has also moved to establish a permanent police-attaché office at its embassy in New Delhi.

TREATIES

India and Colombia have concluded several bilateral agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) covering an extensive matrix of areas, including trade promotion, science and technology, defense, information technology, space, health, traditional medicine, and culture. These instruments provide a sturdy, institutionalised framework for expanding South-South cooperation.

Important mechanisms govern the financial and economic domains. The **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)**, signed on 13 May 2011, continues to prevent fiscal evasion and establish clear taxation rules on business profits. This works alongside the **Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA)**, which was subsequently reinforced via a **Joint Interpretative Declaration (JID)**approved by the Indian Cabinet to modernise investment protection standards and boost private-sector investor confidence between the two markets.

In the defense sector, the 2009 **Defence Cooperation Agreement** remains the anchor for institutionalised collaboration. It provides the foundation for the Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation (JDC), driving initiatives that span defense industrial capacity-building and peacekeeping training partnerships.

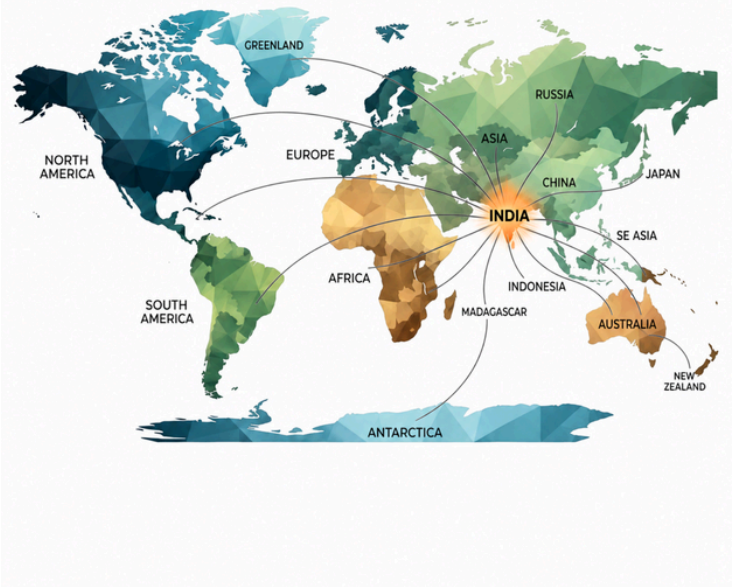
Technological collaboration has accelerated intensely. Expanding upon their foundational 2002 ICT framework, the two countries signed a landmark MoU in February 2024 between India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Colombia's Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies (MINTIC). This agreement facilitates the structural sharing of population-scale open-source digital assets, specifically integrating **India Stack** architectures into Colombia's digital transformation roadmap.

Socio-cultural and scientific ties are anchored by the comprehensive **Cultural Exchange Programme (2023–2026)**, signed during the historic visit of the External Affairs Minister to Bogotá. This agreement paved the way for massive public diplomacy successes, including India serving as the Guest of Honour at the 2026 Bogotá International Book Fair (FILBO). Most recently, during the 10th Foreign Office Consultations in New Delhi, the two nations signed an **Audio-Visual Co-production Agreement**. Making Colombia the 17th country to sign such a treaty with India, this agreement enables filmmakers to pool creative and technical resources while allowing co-productions to qualify for domestic tax incentives and broadcasting quotas in both jurisdictions.

Cumulatively, the evolving treaty architecture reflects a strategic transition into a highly diversified partnership. The official, continuously updated repository of these bilateral instruments is maintained digitally by the Ministry of External Affairs through the Indian Treaties Database.



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