

COLOMBIA TODAY

A Weekly Update from the Embassy of Colombia

June 23, 2017

Vice President Mike Pence to Visit Colombia



President Santos and Vice President Pence at the U.S. Naval Observatory on May 19, 2017. Photo taken by the Presidency.

Last week, the White House announced that Vice President Mike Pence will visit Colombia as part of his trip to Central and South America, August 13-18. While in Bogotá and Cartagena, the Vice President will meet with President Juan Manuel Santos and other key Colombian government officials.

According to the White House announcement, "during his travel, the Vice President will meet with leaders from government and the business community to reaffirm the President's commitment to deepening bilateral trade and investment ties with the region and continue the Administration's support of security cooperation, business engagement, agriculture, and infrastructure development."

President Santos invited the Vice President to come to Colombia when they met in Washington, DC, in May as a part of the Colombian President's visit to meet with President Trump. While in Washington, President Santos also had bipartisan meetings with House and Senate leadership and the leaders of key congressional committees.

Colombia Participates in Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America

Senior Colombian government officials and military leaders were in Miami last Thursday and Friday for the Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America led by Secretary of Homeland Security John F. Kelly and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. Organized by the United States in partnership with Mexico, the Conference brought together regional government and business leaders to address the challenges and opportunities for creating prosperity in the region, particularly in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

Colombian leaders who attended the Conference included:

- Minister of Defense Luis C. Villegas;
- Minister of Finance Mauricio Cardenas;
- Deputy Minister of Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Francisco Echeverri;
- Deputy Minister of National Defense Anibal Fernandez de Soto;
- Commander General of the Military Forces Juan Pablo Rodriguez; and
- Director of Citizen Security of the National Police Jorge Enrique Rodriguez.

COLOMBIA'S COMMITMENT TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Colombia, in its commitment to development in the region, supports Central American countries, in particular the Northern Triangle, through programs that strengthen institutions in areas including nutrition, health, agriculture, modernization of the State, social inclusion, vocational training and environment, among others. Colombia also supports the Mesoamerican Project and cooperation in social promotion, quality management, public services, local governance, security, support for small businesses, trade facilitation and competitiveness, entrepreneurship, telecommunications, risk management, food security and health.

In terms of security and as part of Colombia's security strategy toward the region, since 2013, the capacity of Central American and Caribbean security institutions has been strengthened, with the training of 16,632 officers in 979 activities. Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and the Dominican Republic, particularly through the Joint Action Plan of Colombia and the United States for Central America and the Caribbean, have all supported these efforts.

Colombia is among the top 10 investors in the Northern Triangle countries, with investments that total approximately \$2.4 billion.

Colombian Receives Conservation Leadership Award from National Geographic and The Howard G. Buffett Foundation



Rosamira Guillén with her fellow awardee and officials from the National Geographic Society and The Howard G. Buffett Foundation; Photo taken by the Embassy.

Last Wednesday, June 14, the annual National Geographic Society and The Howard G. Buffett Foundation awarded Rosamira Guillén, a Colombian landscape architect and environmentalist designer turned conservationist, the organizations' Award for Leadership in Conservation. Two awards are presented each year – one for achievement in Africa and the other for achievement in Latin America. Awardees chosen each year are honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC, and receive a one-time grant of \$25,000 to support their ongoing work.

Guillén holds a master's degree in landscape architecture from the State University of New York in Syracuse and was director of the Barranquilla Zoo in her hometown. There, she discovered cotton-top tamarins, a Colombian native species that is critically endangered due to deforestation and illegal pet trade.

Guillén's team conducted awareness and education campaigns for zoo visitors and local schools to draw attention to the charismatic primate. Guillén is now executive director of Fundación Proyecto Tití, an organization she cofounded that is dedicated to the protection and conservation of the cotton-top tamarin.



Cotton-top tamarin

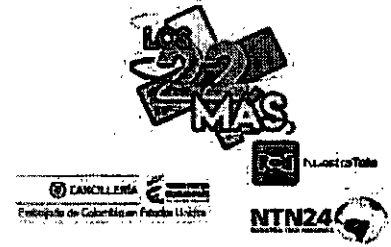
Photo by © Lisa Hoffner, Proyecto Tití website

Click [here](#) to learn more about Guillén's work and Fundación Proyecto Tití.

Embassy Partners with **NTN 24** to Honor **22 Outstanding Colombians** in the United States

The Embassy of Colombia along with **NTN 24**, a leading Colombian television network, recognized and honored some of the most talented Colombians who make the nation proud here in the United States, as part of an initiative called *Los 22 Más*.

Between April 17 and May 17, a panel of three distinguished Colombian judges reviewed hundreds of nominations and narrowed the list down to 22 individuals from a wide range of fields: medicine, science, education, culture, sports and social issues.



UVA, Embassy Hold Forum on Bilateral Relations and International Cooperation

On June 15, the Embassy and the University of Virginia Darden School of Business organized a forum to talk about Colombian politics and the economy, as well as the bilateral relationship between Colombia and the United States and Colombia's relationship with international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund.



L: Acting Colombian Ambassador to the United States Daniel Ávila with UVA official and another Embassy official; R: Forum participants. Photo taken by the Embassy.

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