



Fast Facts on Colombia and the Colombian Economy

The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement offers the opportunity for the United States to strengthen beneficial economic ties with a strategic world economy.

- Colombia has long been America's most stalwart ally in South America. Colombia chairs the U.N. committee implementing sanctions against Iran and has partnered with the United States to provide extensive training and assistance to help the Mexican government defeat violent drug cartels along the U.S.-Mexico border. In Afghanistan, at the request of the United States, Colombia has provided counter-narcotics training and assistance to the government.
- Colombia's unemployment rate has been nearly cut in half from 20.5% in 2000 to 11.7% in 2008. More than three million jobs have been created since 2002, when the U.S. Congress further opened the U.S. market to Colombian exports through the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act — underscoring the power of trade as an effective alternative development program.
- 46 million people live in Colombia, a country that is nearly twice the size of Texas.

In less than 20 years, the enrollment rate for Colombian children in school has increased from 71% in 1991 to 93.5% in 2008. Currently, 73% of Colombians have health care coverage, up from 54% in 2002. Santos' 2011 budget allocates over 27% of the government's budget for education and health care programs, over \$22 billion, a substantial sum given Colombia's \$81.3 billion government budget.

- Colombia's homicide rate was cut in half and kidnappings were reduced by almost 90% over the past five years. Law and order has been restored in rural municipalities. More than 10,000 labor leaders, judges, human rights workers, and journalists benefit from program that provides for their personal security. Colombia's armed forces have received extensive human rights training — more than those anywhere else in the Americas.



The Fight Against Narcotics Trafficking

Colombian governments have had to contend with the combined terrorist activities of left-wing guerrillas, drug cartels, and paramilitary self-defense forces. But in 1999 the Pastrana administration unveiled its "Plan Colombia." Since that time coca production in Colombia has been reduced by 40%, reaching the lowest level in 11 years, according to the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy. Since 2000, Colombian security forces have interdicted cocaine and heroin shipments with an estimated street value between \$35 billion and \$40 billion. Furthermore, according to official statistics, guerrillas were reduced from 24,000 fighters in 2002 to 9,500 in 2010, and paramilitaries have been completely demobilized. On March 1, 2011, Colombia was removed from UN Drugs Watch List.