

COLOMBIA AND CHINA

30 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION

Colombia and China: 30 Years of Friendship and Cooperation

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Prologue

Maria Angela Holguín

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Thirty years ago, Colombia and China formalized diplomatic relationships in a context of dynamics and paradigms that are no longer the same today. World politics as well as the world economy were strongly determined by the logic of the cold war, which at the same time allowed for the generation of cooperation and understanding fora among developing countries. Likewise, the importance of China could not be underestimated; three decades later, there is no doubt about the importance of having strengthened cooperation and friendship bonds with this Asian giant that has extraordinarily vindicated its legacy of greatness and world leadership.

The evolution of topics in the global agenda, the accelerated adjustments, and the expansion of economic globalization have brought new opportunities for economic development and shaped new and complex challenges for all nations, particularly for the developing world. Thus, a retrospective analysis on the ground already covered together is called for, as well as the identification of reference points that will allow understanding the interpretation given by both Colombia and China regarding these issues, since it is essential for future bilateral relations.

Trade plays a pivotal role in this relationship. During the first half of 2010, China became the second most important commercial partner of Colombia, after the United States. Along those same lines, and with one-fourth of the world's population, a business-driven government, and a sustained high economic growth rate, China represents an enormous potential for Latin-American and national exports, as well as for productive transformation programs, and the promotion of tourism. On the other hand, Colombia and China have also maintained an excellent political dialogue, in their constant search for practical cooperation – as defined by President Hu-Hintao.

This publication provides a comprehensive outlook of the Chinese-Colombian relationship from the official and academic perspective, the elements that shape it, and the opportunities that this represents for the development of the country. Lessons derived from migratory experiences, the analysis of economic, commercial, and investment aspects, and the impact of Colombian participation in Expo Shanghai.

I appreciate the effort and cooperation of all the people, entities, and departments that made this compilation possible, as it will no doubt help understand the dynamics of a bilateral relationship that must continue its consolidation process after these first thirty years, based on mutual understanding and respect towards achieving a strategic alliance.

Thankfully,

Maria Angela Holguin
Minister of Foreign Relations