

COLOMBIA TODAY

A Weekly Update from the Embassy of Colombia

March 5, 2014

U.S. and Colombia Hold Fourth Annual U.S.-Colombia High-Level Partnership Dialogue



*Photo: Foreign Minister Holguín and Secretary Kerry;
Photo Credit: U.S. State Department*

On February 28, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Colombian Foreign Minister Maria Holguín [met](#) in Washington, DC, for the fourth annual [U.S.-Colombia High-Level Partnership Dialogue](#) – a forum that facilitates collaboration between Colombia and the United States in a new and broad range of issues.

During Friday's meeting, delegations from both countries held discussions in working groups on Energy; Social and Economic Opportunities; Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance; Environmental Protection and Climate Change; and Culture and Education; and announced expanded cooperation through:

- **Creation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Steering Group** to expand cooperation on ICT issues and develop a plan to involve the private sector in an effort to ensure ICT is used to promote economic development, reduce inequality and enrich the lives of citizens in both countries.
- **Memorandum of Understanding on National Parks** to collaborate on the planning, development and operation of national parks, and other protected areas and cultural sites.
- **Joint statement of intent regarding cooperation on academic mobility** recognizing the importance of strengthening educational and cultural ties.
- **Addressing human rights and justice in conflict zones**; USAID in Colombia will develop in 2014 a four-year, \$15 million program for a local Colombian civil society organization to assist national and sub-national governments in addressing human rights and rule of law needs at the local level.
- **Conflict Victims Civil Society Participation Program**; USAID in Colombia will develop in 2014 a four-year, \$7 million program for a local Colombian civil society organization to increase civil society participation in the implementation of Colombia's groundbreaking new Victims Law.

- **Joint statement on combating human trafficking** stating both countries' commitment to continue collaboration against trafficking in persons by increasing law enforcement efforts against criminals engaged in these activities.

Additionally, the U.S.-Colombia Joint Commission Meeting on Science and Technology met to discuss expanding cooperation on agriculture, health and earth science.

Following their meeting, Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Holguín held a press conference highlighting the importance of the U.S.-Colombia relationship.

Secretary Kerry stated: *“Whether on economic empowerment, which is critical to us, or social inclusion or energy development or environmental protection, or by encouraging, strengthening our cultural and educational exchanges and programs, scientific exchanges, we are really linking ourselves to a common vision about the future.”*

Foreign Minister Holguín stated: *“We wish to continue to work in this sense, because we’re convinced that the new aspects of the agenda will strengthen our relationship, and a country like Colombia will be strengthened further, and so will the region.”*

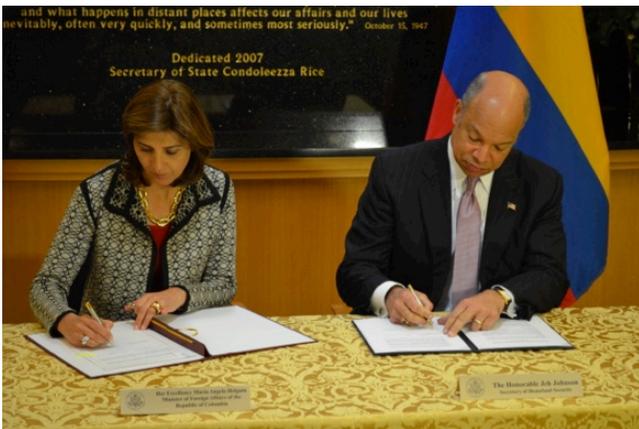


Photo: Foreign Minister Holguín and U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson; Photo Credit: U.S. State Department



Photo: from left to right (back row): Colombian Vice Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development Pablo Vieira, Foreign Minister Holguín and Colombian Ambassador Luis Carlos Villegas; (front row): Colombia Director General of the National Parks Julia Miranda and U.S. Deputy Director for Congressional and External Relations at the National Park Service Christina Goldfuss

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