

# *Venezuela deepens relationship with Colombia in the face of destabilization attempts*

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Caracas, September 6 (RHC)-- Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro affirmed that his Colombian counterpart, Gustavo Petro, "knows that he can count on Venezuela and our Government to make peace in Colombia," during his speech at the second Venezuela-Colombia Binational Tourism Exchange (IBT).

The Venezuelan leader said that his country will continue to work with Colombia and said "let us continue building the best economic, cultural, human, and diplomatic relations that there have ever been between Colombia and Venezuela."

The president referred to the fact that the Venezuelan government acts as a facilitator of the peace process in Colombia, which is why no journalist is allowed to ask questions about Colombia's internal affairs.

"These are internal affairs of Colombia and that is how it is. And that is how it has been and that is how it should continue, so that our relations continue to prosper at a political, cultural, and economic level," he stressed, while pointing out that President Petro "is an honest man" who "has denounced that plans against him have been discovered and we have directly expressed our solidarity."

During his speech, the president recalled the signs of history that support the common issues between Colombia and Venezuela, mainly during the struggles to free themselves from the domination of the Spanish empire.

He also valued as positive the will of both governments to reestablish bilateral relations, for the good of the peoples and urged to continue promoting cross-border development with Colombia, based on building the best economic, cultural, human and diplomatic relations that have ever existed between both countries.

"At the level of Colombian-Venezuelan tourism, in two years the tourist flow between Colombia and Venezuela has grown by 46 percent, and the investments of Colombians in Venezuela to invest in inns, hotels, lodgings is increasing," he said.

The Bolivarian leader highlighted that the largest flow of tourists is provided by Colombia to Venezuela, and urged Venezuelan investors to exploit possible scenarios for Venezuelan tourism development in Colombia.

"In this sense, it is proposed that multi-destination tourist products be increased. I think it is necessary to advance in the tourist products Caracas-Margarita-Táchira-Bogotá; Caracas-Santa Marta-Cartagena; Caracas-Los Roques-Pereira, Medellín, among other multi-destinations. We must increase investment in tourism because it is profitable and safe," Nicolás Maduro said.

The president also assured that in two years, binational trade has progressively increased by 800 percent, which in the first months of 2024 has followed a rate of 56 percent. "Venezuela is already a country that produces and also begins to export high-quality products. And Colombia, which has high-quality products, also begins to import them to Venezuela," he said.

The president ratified his proposal that Venezuela and Colombia enter into an industrial economic zone of investments, production and trade, on the immense border between Táchira and Norte de Santander.

"We are prepared to sign, in the case of Venezuela, with our legal system. We know that there are many countries willing to invest in this economic zone, many countries ready to bring technology and develop this entire zone and make it a great economic zone of peace," he added.

And President Maduro explained that they are working with the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) on a project to build binational tourist corridors, promoting tourist offers in territories of the Venezuelan Andes such as Mérida and Táchira.

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