

# *Presidents of Venezuela and Colombia sign trade agreement*

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**The meeting took place at the Atanasio Girardot International Bridge, on the common border, with delegations from both sides. | Photo: Prensa Presidencial**

Caracas, February 17 (RHC)-- The President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, and his Colombian counterpart, Gustavo Petro, signed on Thursday the Partial Agreement of a Commercial Nature No. 28. The meeting took place at the Atanasio Girardot International Bridge, on the common border, with delegations from both parties.

"It is a pleasure to be here at this border, which we can now cross without any major problems. We are here to sign a partial agreement that is another step towards integration, which I believe should never have been suspended," said the Colombian President.

Gustavo Petro said that the bridges between the two nations must be filled with trade and that the barriers that may still exist to this activity must be removed. "We have customs and administrative agreements. The partial agreement we have just signed still has a lot of work to do because it is not only about filling these bridges with trade but also with people who can come and go," he said.

In conclusion, Petro emphasized that he hopes the border between the two countries will not be the separation of people but "the common point that unites the people who live here and there, without barriers."

For his part, the Venezuelan President stressed the importance of the path of reunification between the two countries. "For us, it is essential that we walk the path of reunion, of union, of reunification between two peoples that have always been marked by providence and destiny to live as brothers and sisters," he said.

The Venezuelan president affirmed that relations between the two parties "are taking on a new dynamic of political and diplomatic dialogue, a new economic, commercial and demographic dynamic. Last January 1st, we took an important step to open all the bridges that unite us and to regularize them, as they are being regularized."

"We are in a new phase of building relations in all senses, in all areas. Even if they have not yet reached the dimensions of our aspirations, our economic and commercial relations are at a good pace, a good dynamic", he stressed.

Nicolas Maduro recalled that Venezuela is subjected to "a regime of blockade, economic, commercial and financial persecution, of illegal and immoral sanctions that hit the backbone of the national income." Hence, it is necessary to design a plan for a war economy "to take actions to create new systems, to stimulate national production, and fortunately, we are making progress."

"In this first month of the year 2023, we maintain the rhythm of growth, of good commercial activity, and it is in this framework that this reunion with Colombia takes place", said President Maduro, adding that the signed agreement "puts in the path of productivity work and economic and commercial growth of both countries, looking forward."

He commented on the possibility of creating an economic team to begin projecting and designing "the creation of this binational economic zone of a joint development between Norte de Santander and Táchira."

On February 3rd, the Venezuelan president signed an agreement with the Colombian Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism, Germán Umaña Mendoza, to promote and protect investments between the two nations.

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