



Open Letter to The Presidential Candidates

The Private Sector's Vision for Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Growth



U.S. Chamber of Commerce

U.S.-Colombia
Business Council



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June 6, 2022

Candidates for the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia,

The U.S.-Colombia Business Council (USCBC) and its member companies are committed to fostering and strengthening the commercial bilateral relationship between the United States and Colombia by promoting two-way trade opportunities, exchanging best practices, and convening technical discussions that promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The Council is also focused on exploring issues that hinder the commercial relationship and proposing solutions to them, advancing trade and investment opportunities in non-traditional sectors, and supporting socioeconomic growth in Colombia and the United States, particularly through post-conflict initiatives.

In this open letter, the Council outlines the private sector's vision for promoting inclusive and sustainable growth in Colombia. With this in view, we share our recommendations for the new administration and underscore our commitment to working in partnership with the next president to advance our common goals.

Table 1: The U.S.-Colombia Business Council's Overarching Priorities

1. Strengthen the rule of law and investment climate by unlocking Colombia's potential to attract increased private sector investment by strengthening the rule of law through enhanced regulatory transparency, predictability and stability, accountability, and due process.
2. Promote the growth of the digital economy in Colombia through digitalization and expanded access to broadband with smart and forward-looking policies that support financial inclusion, increase transparency through digital government services, and incorporate SMEs and rural areas.
3. Increase bilateral trade and maximize the potential of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement by reducing barriers to trade and promoting trade facilitation, regulatory coherence, and effective IP protection.
4. Foster the development of a resilient healthcare system through policies that promote innovation, competitiveness, investment, and the adoption of technology to generate stronger health care outcomes for the Colombian population.
5. Advance sustainable policy solutions that facilitate economic transition by engaging with the Colombian Government in the development of a regulatory framework that will support sustainable investments, competitiveness, innovation, and positive social outcomes, as well as policies that facilitate economic transition.



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The Council looks forward to working with the new government on the following bilateral policy priorities, which we believe will increase investor confidence, attract sustainable investments, and further position Colombia as a regional leader in areas such as sustainability, nearshoring, health, R&D, and innovation.

The Council fully supports Colombia in its ambitions to serve as a critical link in global value chains and becoming an attractive nearshoring partner to the U.S. and other countries in the region. We support:

- The full application of the CTPA/FTA provisions and the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement to reduce barriers to trade and promote trade facilitation, regulatory coherence and effective IP protection.
- The expansion of non-traditional exports, including poultry and other agricultural products, to the U.S.
- The increased use of e-commerce to expand Colombian exports.
- Relief on Section 232 tariffs on Colombian steel imports.
- Advocating for the inclusion of cumulative rules of origin and short supply mechanisms to increase Colombian exports to the U.S.
- The promotion of Colombia as an investment destination through a series of engagements with the public and private sector, and the dissemination of Colombia's Investment Roadmap.
- The implementation of a nearshoring strategy between the U.S. and Colombia that will create a more resilient and efficient regional value chain.

Increased trade, transborder e-commerce and investment will lead to resilient supply chains that integrate micro, small, and medium enterprises; create new job opportunities; and encourage private-sector-led innovation to solve social and environmental challenges so that the benefits of free enterprise are felt at all levels of society.

The Council is committed to fostering nature-based solutions that support Colombia to meet its long-term sustainability goals, including in the areas of energy transition, biodiversity protection, sustainable agriculture and transportation, climate action, and circular economy. We support:

- The advancement of a regulatory framework to support sustainable investments, innovation, and social outcomes to bolster Colombia's competitiveness agenda, aligned with global sustainability agreements and standards.



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- The promotion of greater bilateral trade in environmental solution technology and production to support Colombia's clean energy transition, including the expansion of hydroelectric power, gas, solar, and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).
- Public-private dialogue to identify regulatory challenges, share industry best practices, and reinforce standards that promote environmentally sustainable infrastructure projects.

Colombia has long been recognized as a leader in environmental sustainability regionally, and we look forward to the country continuing to take center stage in these efforts as it looks to heighten its role in the negotiation of international agreements and standards and sets global trends for ambitious climate action.

The Council is well positioned to support Colombia in its efforts to implement a digital transformation strategy by identifying best practices and standards and promoting investments in the ICT sector.

We support:

- The advancement of a public-private dialogue and partnership to stimulate investments in high-speed fiber, 4G and 5G networks and industry-led initiatives, such as OpenRAN or other innovative technologies, like low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite systems, to ensure equitable access to broadband.
- The implementation of digital strategies that support financial inclusion, transform education and increase transparency through digital government services.
- Removing barriers and ensuring that SMEs have access to the right tools and applications to scale opportunities in the digital economy, and the incorporation of SMEs and rural areas into the digital economy and their participation in e-commerce.
- The creation of local content for digital services in Colombia through the development of a set of incentives that foster local production of content, conducive to growth and innovation as part of a diverse and dynamic economy.
- The free flow of data, which is essential for the creation of global value chains that increase efficiency and permit companies of all sizes to access the global market.
- Fostering a free and open internet, promoting inclusive trade, opening new market opportunities, and addressing discriminatory and protectionist digital trade restrictions.
- Strengthening of Colombia's cyber security infrastructure by developing greater and better analysis, prevention, and response capabilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of a robust digital economy and the benefits of digital transformation policies, smart regulation and deregulation, improved digital



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competitiveness and the need to promote full connectivity and digital inclusion, which will be essential for driving economic reactivation and enhancing e-commerce across all sectors of the economy.

Colombia needs to act fast on one key area blocking further digital development: high spectrum costs. The GSMA calculates that if Colombia's spectrum prices were closer to the regional average, 4G deployment in the country would have been two years quicker, reaching 2 million additional citizens, with download speeds up to 40% faster.

The Council recognizes the importance of a resilient healthcare system and the need for policies that promote innovation and competitiveness, as well as investment and the adoption of technology, to generate stronger health outcomes for the Colombian population. We support:

- Efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity of INVIMA to create a more efficient and modernized system that promotes innovation, growth, and new technologies.
- Enhanced dialogue between Ministers of Health and Finance and public-private partnerships to bolster the environment for investments in healthcare infrastructure, innovation, research and development, and healthcare services.
- Improved access to women's healthcare to close gender gaps in health and education, reduce child and adolescent pregnancies, and break cycles of poverty.
- A robust IP framework that adheres to international standards and will enhance Colombia's competitiveness in the life sciences sector, stimulate investments in high-risk, high-capital healthcare R&D, and facilitate timely patient access to medicines.
- Facilitate public and private sector engagement to bridge the digital gaps that prevent disadvantage populations from receiving the benefits of digital health tools.

Colombia has positioned itself as a regional production and distribution hub for the pharmaceutical industry and continues to expand its health system to meet the growing demand for healthcare services. With a consolidated pharmaceutical sector that continues to grow and innovate, Colombia has an opportunity to not only attract more FDI, but also to become a regional center for R&D and increase exports from the pharmaceutical sector.

The U.S. Chamber's International IP Index illustrates that economies with effective IP protection receive 32% more private-sector investment in research and development, have over 10 times more clinical trial activity, and create environments that are twice as conducive to biotech innovation.



The Council believes that access to education and adequate tools and resources promotes inclusive growth and equitable opportunities for all Colombians. We support:

- The Colombian government and the private sector in their efforts to strengthen Colombia's workforce, specifically with regards to English language proficiency and technological skills.
- Diversity, equity and inclusion in the workforce through private-sector-led policies and initiatives.
- The promotion and prioritization of digital skills education, training initiatives, and workforce development and the need for systemic capacity building programs that promote the values of a free, open and secure internet.

As Colombia's economy continues to grow and become more integrated in the world, it is critical that the country's workforce receives adequate education and training to meet global demand, and that regulations and incentives are in place to promote job creation.

The Council advocates for strengthening the rule of law to attract increased private sector investment in Colombia through enhanced regulatory transparency, predictability and stability, accountability, and due process. We support:

- Transparent and timely approval processes, greater conformity between state and national rules, consistent application of existing rules, and the protection of existing contracts, licenses and permits.
- Increased opportunities for private sector consultation and input into draft regulations, regularized dialogue with relevant government officials and regulators, and fact-based risk and impact assessments.
- Regular dialogue with the Colombian government to seek resolution of barriers to investment affecting one or multiple sectors and to strengthen the rule of law.
- Colombia's participation in the OECD, which elevates standards, improves policies, and strengthens best practices in Colombia, making the economy more attractive for all investors by creating a more transparent and sustainable market environment.

The rule of law is a critical factor in fostering an investment climate that supports equality, economic growth, and shared prosperity for all Colombians.



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About the U.S.-Colombia Business Council

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Business Association of Colombia (ANDI) and their members founded the U.S.-Colombia Business Council (USCBC) in 2016 to foster the strongest possible bilateral commercial relationship between the U.S. and Colombia by promoting two-way trade opportunities that support inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The U.S. Chamber and ANDI have long supported and worked with both governments through convening technical discussions and leveraging research tools to advance cross-sector policy recommendations designed to foster economic growth that's beneficial to businesses small and large in the U.S. and Colombia and that allows the people and communities behind those businesses to thrive. We believe that strengthening the environment for trade and investment will further bolster competition for ideas and talent, leading to a more dynamic and resilient economy that is better prepared for the future.

About the U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business organization representing companies of all sizes across every sector of the economy. Our members range from the small businesses and local chambers of commerce that line the Main Streets of America to leading industry associations and large corporations. They all share one thing: They count on the U.S. Chamber to be their voice in Washington, across the country, and around the world. For more than 100 years, we have advocated for pro-business policies that help businesses create jobs and grow our economy.

About ANDI

National Business Association of Colombia (ANDI) is a non-profit organization whose main purpose is to expand and promote economic, social and political principles within a free enterprise system, based upon beliefs that include human dignity, political democracy, social justice, private property and liberty. Founded in Medellin in 1944, ANDI is the most comprehensive private sector association in Colombia. It groups more than 1300 companies that belong to different sectors of the economy and therefore represents a high percentage of Colombia's GDP and total employment. As representative of the private sector's interests, the National Business Association of Colombia assumes the representation of its members before national and international institutions, dealing with economic, legal, social, environmental, and business issues.



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