

Latin America sees China as a practical trade reality



By Roberto Morejon

Colombia could realize its ambitious railway development plans with investment from China, according to a successful visit to Beijing by President Gustavo Petro.

As a result of the trip, both governments signed 12 cooperation agreements on economic, agricultural, investment, commercial, technological, environmental, scientific, educational and cultural matters.

The list illustrates the elevation of bilateral ties to the level of Strategic Partnership, which will allow giving priority to Colombian rail transport.

During his state visit, Petro met with members of one of the Chinese companies in charge of the construction of the first line of the Bogota subway, a long-delayed dream.

The Asian giant gave the go-ahead to the South American country's plans to expand its railroad network to connect Caribbean and Pacific ports and complement the Panama Canal services.

However, Colombia is not the only country to receive the benefits of growing ties with China.

Latin American presidents and ministers frequently arrive in Beijing, and not only on the occasion of the New Silk Road, a gigantic trade and investment project between China and almost 140 countries.

In an increasingly multipolar world, although the United States tries to prevent it, the region south of the Rio Grande is looking for openings in China, where they know how to interpret the needs of the global South.

Latin America is taking advantage of the Chinese market to export key items such as frozen meat, fruits, flowers and raw materials.

China is Latin America's second largest trading partner and has become the most important supplier of goods.

Trade between China and its partners on this side of the world will exceed US\$700 billion in 2035, a two-fold increase compared to 2023.

From its hegemonic position, the United States considers China's commercial rapprochement with Latin America a danger and hinders it.

The European Union prioritizes rapprochement with Latin America, talking about projects and taking space away from China.

As has happened with President Petro in his visit to Beijing, several leaders of South and Central American nations have seen China as a hopeful destination for imports.

They also highly value the world's second economic power as a source of key investments in a world where technology applied to the economy is cardinal.

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