

**Xinhua. 2009. "China reaffirms importance of ties with Colombia". Xinhua, September 4**

BEIJING, Sept. 4 (Xinhua) -- The Chinese government placed great importance on developing relations with Colombia, Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping said Friday.

Xi met Colombian Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing Friday afternoon.

This is Bermudez' first trip to Asia as Foreign Minister. He said making China the first stop of his Asian trip showed the Colombian government attaches priority to relations with China.

Xi said Colombia was a Latin American nation with significant influence which played an important role in regional and international affairs.

Xi visited Colombia in February.

He said since China and Colombia established diplomatic links in 1980, bilateral relations have witnessed smooth growth and especially in recent years had entered a new stage of rapid growth.

He said the two countries had continuously enhanced mutual trust in politics, deepened mutually beneficial cooperation and achieved rich results from cultural exchanges.

China and Colombia were developing countries faced with the common tasks of boosting economic growth and improving people's living standards, Xi said. China was ready to work with Colombia to further expand and deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in various areas so as to benefit the people of both countries.

Bermudez said Colombia wishes to establish long-term dialogues with China in fields such as politics and trade and is ready to push for the advancement of friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in all fields. Colombia welcomed Chinese companies' investment and would cooperate fully.

He expressed admiration and congratulations for China's achievements in economic and social development.

Earlier Friday, Bermudez held talks with China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi.

Yang said further enhancement of bilateral ties for mutual benefit, and friendly cooperation, accorded with the fundamental interests of the two nations and people.

Bermudez said the Colombian people had friendly feelings toward the Chinese.

His country attached great importance to developing ties with China and wished to further deepen bilateral exchanges and cooperation in sectors such as economics, trade, politics and culture, he said.

He invited Chinese companies to invest in Colombia and welcomed Chinese tourists.

Bermudez said Colombia was willing to work with China to exploit fully existing cooperative mechanisms, so as to promote comprehensive development of bilateral ties.

Statistics show that trade between China and Colombia reached 4.1 billion U.S. dollars in 2008, up 22 percent from 2007, and Chinese investment in Colombia totaled 700 million dollars so far. End item.