

**Xinhua. 2015. "Spotlight: China, Colombia eye stronger economic ties, to step up production capacity cooperation". Xinhua, May 22**

BOGOTA, May 22 (Xinhua) -- China and Colombia on Thursday agreed to deepen cooperation in a host of areas including production capacity, equipment manufacturing and infrastructure construction to boost economic ties.

The agreement came as visiting Chinese Premier Li Keqiang met with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos at the presidential palace for discussions on bilateral relations and international issues of common concern.

Describing his talks with Santos as "frank and fruitful," Li told reporters after the meeting that China has rich experience and advantageous production capacity in infrastructure construction and equipment manufacturing.

"We stand ready to set up plants in Colombia to produce iron and steel, construction materials and engineering equipment according to the needs of the Colombian side," Li said, adding that bilateral cooperation therein is expected to lower the cost of production and provide jobs for local communities.

Li stressed that China's cooperation with Colombia in production capacity development is open to Western countries, which enjoy advanced technologies. The cooperation, combined with China's cost-effective equipment, will help boost industrialization and infrastructure construction in the South American country, he said.

It will not only secure a win-win situation for China and Colombia, but will also promote cooperation between developing and developed countries to achieve an all-win scenario that is conducive to global economic recovery, Li said.

Santos said while meeting the press that Colombia views China as an important strategic cooperation partner.

He said that cooperation with China will be conducive to advancing the reconstruction and social-economic development of his once war-plagued country.

Earlier on Thursday, Li said in the talks with Santos that China and Colombia have broad prospects of cooperation, with the two economies being strongly complementary.

China stands ready to expand mutual investment and advance the industrial connection with the Colombian side, he said.

The premier also said that his government will focus on developing the cooperation in production capacity and equipment manufacturing with the South American country.

China and Colombia should also discuss models of financial cooperation to support the two countries' cooperation in production capacity and equipment manufacturing as well as infrastructure construction, Li said.

Li's visit to the South American country marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between China and Colombia.

Li said that his country is willing to enhance political mutual trust and practical cooperation, expand people-to-people exchanges and closely coordinate and cooperate with Colombia in international and regional affairs, so as to better benefit the two peoples amid reaffirmed friendship.

"China attaches great importance to the cultural exchanges and mutual understanding with Colombia," the premier said.

"We stand ready to closely cooperate with Colombia in areas including culture, education, science and technology, tourism and sports to expand non-governmental exchanges," he said.

For his part, Santos said that he believes Li's current visit will become a landmark in the development of the Colombia-China bilateral relations.

Colombia welcomes Chinese side's active participation in the infrastructure construction including highways, subways, airports and ports and construction of the economic development zone in the country, he said.

The president said that the two sides should seek cooperation in production capacity, equipment manufacturing and agriculture, enhance financial cooperation and expand tourism cooperation.

The two countries also reached a consensus to launch a feasibility study on the China-Colombia bilateral free trade agreement and discuss the pact to avoid double taxation.

After the talks, the two leaders witnessed the signing of a series of bilateral cooperation deals in areas including trade, production capacity, infrastructure construction, culture, education, science and technology, agriculture and finance.

In a joint declaration issued after the talks, the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of investment, economy and trade, and bring into play the role of the China-Colombia Mixed Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation in the capacity of a mechanism for cooperation promotion.

The two countries also agreed that strengthening cultural exchanges is an effective approach for boosting mutual understanding and promoting sustainable development of bilateral relations.

In an effort to promote nongovernmental communication, the two sides planned to enhance art exchange in the fields of music and stage performance, and circus and film show, and to intensify academic exchange from 2015 to 2018.

Li arrived in Bogota on Thursday for an official visit after his trip to Brazil, the first leg of his four-nation Latin America tour which will also take him to Peru and Chile.

His visit comes about four months after the first ministerial meeting of the Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in Beijing, where China and Latin American

countries agreed to increase their trade to 500 billion U.S. dollars by 2025. China also pledged to bring its accumulative investment in the region to 250 billion dollars by then. Enditem