

Basic Information
To Participants to the IX Regional Meeting for
Latin America and the Caribbean country Parties of the UNCCD
Bogota (Colombia) 17-20 June 2003



BASIC INFORMATION ON BOGOTÁ



Torres del Parque (Bogotá)

Population: 10.000.000 habitants approximatively
Geography: Bogota is located in the centre of the Republic of Colombia, at 2,600 meters above the sea, 4° 35'56" north latitude and 74°04'51" west latitude. Bogota was established on 6 August of 1,538 by Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada and recognised as Capital District in 1991's Constitution. Bogota is the first economic, cultural, political and social city of Colombia.

Official
Language: Spanish
Currency: Peso Colombiano



CONFERENCE LOCATION AND ACCOMMODATION DETAILS

The IX Regional Meeting of Latin American and Caribbean Countries Party to the UNCCD will be convened at Hotel La Fontana located in "Avenida 127, No. 2110 Bogotá from 17 to 20 June, 2003. The price for a single room breakfast included, is 177.00 Colombian Pesos per night (approx. 60 US Dollars). An additional one US dollar daily tax per person will be charged. Participants are requested to inform the hotel when making reservation of their attendance at the meeting to secure the abovementioned price as this was specially negotiated for the event. Kindly be advised those participants are expected to make their own reservation.

For reservations
Tel+571 615-4400
Fax: +571 614-7434
Email: reservas@hotelesestelar.com.co
Contact person: Ms. Sandra PACHON



BOGOTÁ ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Passport

Cuban, Haitian and Nicaraguan citizens need an entry visa to visit Bogotá.

Applicants for entry visas must fill in a Visa Form obtained from the Colombian Consulate of their respective countries. Visas may be obtained from any Colombia' Consulates overseas, providing the following documents:

- Valid passport, which date of expiration exceeds three (3) months after the date of the IX Regional Meeting, with pages in blank to stamp the visa on request.
- 3 coloured pictures, 3x3.
- A safe-conduct pass issued by the Security Administrative Department, if need be.
- In all applications, a copy of the letter of invitation of UNCCD to participate at the IX Regional Meeting should be included to ease formalities.
- A certificate of good conduct issued by the competent authority of the home country or country of residence, dated not exceeding 6 months back.

The Immigration Section of Diplomatic Missions and/or Consulates, could issue a Courtesy Visa with multiple entries, for:

- In attention to related special intellectual, professional, cultural, academic, scientific, political, managerial, commercial, social, sportive and artistic related programmes or activities.
- For exchanges, programmes or related activities, sponsored by organizations or public/private institutions.
- In accordance with an International Agreement, a visa could be granted to Officials, Experts, Technicians or civil servants of international organizations
- To the permanent companion (husband or wife), of a civil servant working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- To a foreign, national of a country with whom Colombia has subscribed or subscribes an Agreement regarding migratory facilities to managers, legal representatives, directors, executives and business men.
- To students, practicers, language teachers and assistants, visiting Bogotá in the context of Agreements on Cooperation subscribed between the Government of Colombia and their country or sponsored by the Colombian Institute for Education and Technical Studies overseas "Mariano Ospina Pérez" ICITEX.

Detailed information on this, is found at the Web page: www.minrelext.gov.co/servicios

Embassies and Consulates in Bogotá:

EMBAJADA DE ARGENTINA
EMBAJADA DE BOLIVIA
EMBAJADA DE BRASIL
EMBAJADA COSTA RICA
EMBAJADA CUBA

Calle 40 A # 13 -09 Tel 6 350109
Carrera 9c # 114 -96 Tel 6 298252
Calle 93 # 14 - 20 P - 8 Tel 2 120800
Carrera 8 # 95 - 48 Tel 2 561105
Carrera 9 # 92 - 54 Tel 6 217054 telefax 61143 32.

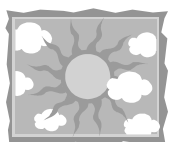
EMBAJADA CHILE	Calle 100 # 11b - 44 Tel 2 147990
EMBAJADA ECUADOR	Calle 89 # 13 - 07 Tel 6 350322
EMBAJADA EL SALVADOR	Carrera 9 # 80 -15 Of 503 Tel 3 496765
EMBAJADA DE ESPAÑA	Calle 92 # 12 - 68 Tel 6 220090
EMBAJADA DE HAITI	Calle 95 No. 10-29 Tel. 2568955
EMBAJADA DE NICARAGUA	Tr14 A 119-88 (57) (1) 6198911
EMBAJADA DE PANAMA	Cl 92 7-70 (57) (1) 2574452
EMBAJADA DEL PARAGUAY	Cl 72 9-55 Of 802 (57) (1) 2111527
EMBAJADA DEL PERU	Cr10 93-48 (57) (1) 2576292

CONSULADO DE GUATEMALA Chancillería y Consulado Diagonal 32-27
Tel 2591496 ; fax 2741196

CONSULADO DE NICARAGUA Transversal 14A N. 119-88
Tel:6198911 6198934 Telefax 2157911

CONSULADO DE PANAMA Cl 92 7-70 Tel:2574452 2575068

CONSULADO DE PERU Cl 90 14-26 Of 417 Tel: 2573147 2576846



WEATHER

Is warm all year around, with an average annual temperature of 14°C. During summer time, maximum temperature goes up 25°C and the minim down to -2°C. Showers change annually in the Sabana of Bogotá, falling approximately 1.500 mm in the southeast mountains, whilst in the southwest showers fall 500 mm less. Summer or dry season runs from June to August and from December to February. Rains fall generally from March to May and from September to November.



BOGOTÁ TIME ZONE

- ❖ Bogotá falls in the Atlantic Time Zone
- ❖ Bogotá is 4 hours, by plane, to Miami
- ❖ Bogotá has the same hour as Atlanta, New York, Washington and Miami (USA).
- ❖ Bogotá Standard Time is Greenwich Mean Time, minus five hours.
- ❖ In Bogotá sun stands out at 5.30 am and is hidden at 6.30 pm.



MONEY

The Colombian Peso is Bogotá's official currency. Notes are issued in denominations of 50.000 pesos (purple); 20.000 pesos (blue); 10.000 pesos (red); 5.000 pesos (green); 2.000 pesos (white with pink) and, 1.000 (sepia colour). Size is the same. Coins in circulation are issued in 50, 100, 200 and 500 pesos, in different sizes. Most major credit cards are accepted in the market.

The official exchange rate against the US Dollar is: 1US\$ = 2.860 Colombian Pesos. The exchange rate changes daily. Around "El Dorado" Airport, there are commercial banks with efficient financial transactions.



BANCOS Y CASAS DE CAMBIO

Banks and offices for Money Exchange

Banks in Bogota operate from Monday through Thursday, from 9 am to 3 pm., Fridays from 9 am to 3.30 pm. Some banks are also opened until night and on weekends. The last day of the month, banks operate only until 12 noon.

The automated banking machines operate daily 24 hours; some provide, as a choice, English language. Consultations permitted are: balance, retirements, transfers and cash. **Bear in mind not to provide anyone with your personal code.** Automated banking machines are strategically located, particularly in principal avenues and commercial centres. Some as Cirrus, Visa and Master Cards perform international transactions, ie. debt and credit. The automated banking machines open from Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 4 pm and, on Saturdays from 9 am to 12.

It is advisable NOT to change dollars in the street.



CREDIT CARDS AND TRAVELLERS CHEQUES

Most hotels, restaurants and commercial establishments accept international credit cards; ie Master and Visa Cards. Only most exclusive places accept American Express and Diners Club Cards.

Travellers cheques circulating more in Bogota and accepted at exclusive hotels, come from American Express and Citicorp. American Express and Citicorp are not common in the market.

Normally, the rate for exchange of Travellers Cheques is better than that for exchange of USDollars.



TRANSPORTATION

“El Dorado” Airport is located 13 Km northeast Bogota City. The airport counts in with libraries, restaurants, boutiques, crafts, sitting rooms for VIPs and 2 information offices for tourists, open from 8 am through 7 pm., located in the international and national platforms, respectively.

There are “yellow” taxis at “El Dorado” Airport. The fare goes from 6 to 10 US\$, depending on the destination. A computer for public use indicates rates for transportation and is located at the “exit” of the national and international platforms. IT IS ADVISIBLE TO USE THE TAXIS SERVICES NEAR THE AIRPORT’S FACILITIES. Public transportation service, (buses), fare does not exceed 0.40 cents of US\$.

All around Bogota are accessible vias where big and small buses pass by. Bus fare varies between 0.25 and 0.40 cents US\$. At night, on Sundays and on holidays, the bus fare is incremented a bit.

The taxis service is new; the service is fast and economic, depending on the distance. Taxis can be taken on the street or inquiries be made by phone; 4111 111; 4333 333 and/or 3111 111. Night service is charged slightly more.



The Transmilenio Service is a unique and original metropolitan transport system, implemented to assist and improve the inefficient and uncomfortable massive public transportation and to avoid pressure of traffic. There are several channels of access to this service. The fare is 0.40 cents USDollars.



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Colombia is a social State of rights, organized as a United Republic, decentralized, with autonomy in its territorial; democratic, participative and pluralist entities. The Legislative, Executive and Judicial bodies vest the Public Power.

The Legislative Power is represented at the Parliament and consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives elected for 4 years in general elections. The President of the Republic is the supreme administrative authority. The national government is conformed by the President of the Republic, the Ministers and the Directors of Administrative Departments. The President of the Republic is elected in general elections for a period of 4 years.

The Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Justice, The Council of State, The Supreme Council of Justice, The Controller, the Tribunals and the Judges, administer justice.

The Controller conducts attentive observance on fiscal arrangements and controls the Administration outcomes.



SOCIAL SERVICE

Bogotá counts with 32 public Hospitals, decentralized since 1998, and transformed massively in Social Enterprises of the State. Bogotá counts as well with private Hospitals and Health Centres.

Bogotá concentrates 15% of the school enrolment of the country; 10% of the public school enrolment and nearly 28% of the private school enrolment. There are 3.612 pre-scholastics, basic, primary and secondary teaching establishments, of which 2.924 are private and 688 official constituencies. Bogotá counts with public and private universities offering professional, technical and technological education as well as with advanced training programmes at the level of specialization, master and doctorate.

Bogotá counts with efficient services of aqueduct, sewage system, electricity, efficient direct national and international telephone lines, Internet service and others related.

Voltage: The electricity in Bogota is 110V. Plugs are American style with 2 flat entry pins.

Water: Is drinkable; however, it is advisable to drink bottling water



BOGOTA CITY AND THE PEOPLE

Bogotá, capital of Colombia, counts with a varied diverse population. People from all over the country can be seen in Bogotá City.

Bogotá city has skyscraper architecture, big business and commercial places, turning the city with major work opportunities, places for study and recreation. This is why the city shows a combination of habitants and culture that confers a special distinction.

The better preserved historic centre corresponds to La Candelaria and La Catedral districts, where La Colonia and Republic Ages can be perceived. Those districts show institutional and religious architecture as much as domestic architecture and its evolution through almost five centuries of history.



MORE ABOUT BOGOTÁ D.C., ...

The city offers lots of entertainment: good restaurants with local and international gastronomy. “Music Hall”, spectacles, comfortable and safe commercial centres where tourists can buy clothes, leather, emerald and crafts at attractive prices. All year around and in certain seasons, good concerts play; there are Opera, Zarzuela and Jazz seasons; two seasons of bullfights and the best festival of the continent in International Theatre, which plays at the eve of Easter.

Bogota has countless churches that determine a period in time. Among the most important are those located in the centre of the city, ie the Cathedral located next to Plaza Bolivar, true testimony of history. It is built on the same place where the first mass was celebrated on the occasion of Santafé de Bogotá's foundation. Other churches, to highlight for its artistic value, surround the Palacio Nariño, ie Santa Clara and San Agustin Convents. The Santuarios de Monserrate and that of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe can be seen from the eastern mountains surrounding the city.



More information on Bogotá (Colombia), can be consulted in the Web page: www.bogota-dc.com

For any other information, please contact:

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