

NEWSLETTER CLAS-GRULAC

JUNE 2021

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1
AUTHORED BY: CENTRE OF LATIN
AMERICAN STUDIES (CLAS) –
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
AND GRULAC-MALAYSIA



*A REVIEW OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LATIN
AMERICAN COUNTRIES AND MALAYSIA*

COVER IMAGE: SRDC
DESIGN: GRULAC



INTRODUCTION

The Center of Latin America Studies (CLAS) has successfully established itself as one of Southeast Asia's top Centre in Latin America studies. Established under the University Malaya internationalization plan with a philosophy of enhancing Southeast Asia-Latin America relations, CLAS aims to foster exchange of top academics with a view to developing better understanding between Southeast Asia and Latin America cultures, diplomatic, business, political, trade, and economics practices of both continents. The origins of CLAS can be traced back to the idea of establishing closer linkages between Southeast Asia and Latin America.

In 2012, the University of Malaya established the Centre of Latin America Studies (CLAS), the first step of CLAS cooperation in research designed to support the three pillars of the South-South cooperation process. CLAS was transformed into a full-fledged research institution in the oldest and top university in Malaysia. Over the years, CLAS has received continued support from the government of Malaysia, working in partnership with other countries. This reflects Malaysia's commitment towards to the internationalization of its research exchange worldwide and also the advancement of the idea of South-South education and knowledge exchange programs as an educational hub that provides a network of knowledge for Southeast Asia and Latin America in the twenty-first century.

The core objective of CLAS is to further develop Southeast Asia-Latin America relations by providing opportunities for researchers for career advancement as well as to enhance the academic and cultural experience of different scholars, with a view to developing in them, a better understanding of the cultural, historical, political, trade, and economics practices of both regions. It aims to be a place where intellectual discourses are held and key issues on Globalization, knowledge decentralization, technologies exchange between Southeast Asia and Latin America are discussed. CLAS comparative research pillars indicate the breadth and quality of expertise that the CLAS can bring to bear. As such, our researchers are central to the realization of a collaborative and innovative education hub for the bright future in the relationship between Southeast Asia and Latin America.

Dr. Mario Arturo Ruiz Estrada
Coordinator

Centre of Latin American Studies (CLAS)
University of Malaya (UM)



A SHORT REVIEW ABOUT THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND MALAYSIA



*Premises of the
first Argentine
Embassy in Kuala
Lumpur, in
Damansara
Hight's, later a
school and today
abandoned.*



THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA IN MALAYSIA

Since the first years of the independence of the Federation of Malaya, in 1957, both countries have been building and consolidating a relationship of friendship, of exchange in different fields and of mutual respect. Today Malaysia is one of the most important trading partners of Argentina (the 15th), with a total volume of bilateral trade that exceeds US\$ 1.2 billion.

Along with the presence of the first companies based in both countries in the 90s, such as IMPSA and Bedson (Argentine) and Petronas or IJM (Malaysian), in the recent years we have seen new ones established in Malaysia, like Workana (provider of freelance services), Verion (precision agriculture), Galileo (natural gas transport) and Imartek (agricultural and infrastructure projects), which are helping to boost the bilateral relationship. Both countries formally established diplomatic relations on the 7th June 1967, four years after the Proclamation of Malaysia.

The Argentine Embassy was opened in Kuala Lumpur in August 1983 while Malaysia did the same in Buenos Aires in 1989. During all these years we have also been able to develop important cultural and academic ties that bring together and generate empathy between Argentines and Malaysians. Malaysia is a close friend and a nation highly appreciated by the Argentinian people. More than fifty years have passed since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries, and it is a great pleasure to look back to see, not only how far we have come, but also the great prospects for the bilateral relationship that appear ahead.



BRAZIL – MALAYSIA DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP

THE EMBASSY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL IN MALAYSIA

Brazil is the largest and most populous country in South America, and the only one that speaks Portuguese. It ranks sixth in the world in terms of territory and population, with more than 8,515,770 sq km and 211 million people, and is currently the eight largest economy in the world, in PPP Adjusted GDP (USD \$3.078 trillions). Brazil is an industrialized country with a diversified economy and a very competitive agribusiness sector, and is by far the world's largest exporter of halal meat. Diplomatic relations between Brazil and Malaysia were established in 1959. In 1981, Brazil opened its diplomatic mission in Kuala Lumpur.

One could argue that our historic and human relations date far back to the XVI Century, when the Portuguese arrived, almost simultaneously, to the shores of Malaya and Brazil. In Malacca, St. Paul's Church was originally built by Duarte Coelho, who a few years later, in 1534, would become the first lord-proprietor and Governor (“donatário”) of Pernambuco, the most successful province of Colonial Brazil in those days. Because of the Portuguese presence in Malaysian territory, Brazil and Malaysia share similar words such as “almari”, “tinta”, “sepatu” and “keju”, which are derived from Portuguese, and “bambu”, “orangotango”, “durião” and “sagu”, which are derived from Bahasa Melayu.

Over six decades of diplomatic relations, Brazil and Malaysia have built a solid and profitable relationship. The two countries share many values and have complementary economies. Bilateral relations are excellent and have their main expression in the economic-commercial aspect. Brazil remains the largest Latin American investor in Malaysia and, in 2020, Malaysia was the 14th main destination for Brazilian exports in the world. Petronas has become, since 2019, an important investor in Brazil.



The Embassy of Brazil in Kuala Lumpur was first located, from 1982 to 2004, in a house in Damansara.





BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILE - MALAYSIA



THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE IN MALAYSIA

The Embassy of Chile in Malaysia was established in 1979 as a concurrence from Indonesia. After ten years, the Chilean government appointed Minister Counsellor Ronald Geiger as the first head of mission resident in Kuala Lumpur. Later, from 1990 to 1994, Mr. Jaime Lagos was appointed as first resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Chile to Malaysia, and a few years after to Brunei Darussalam. As from then, the Mission has been headed by the following ambassadors: Octavio Errázuriz, Pedro Undurraga, Roberto Ibarra, Patricio Torres, José Manuel Ovalle, Christian Rehren and Rodrigo Pérez. Since October 2020, this function has been entrusted to Ambassador Diego Velasco-von Pilgrimm.

The relationship between the two countries has developed multidimensionally, in the political, economic, real estate development, manufacturing, naval construction, scientific and technological exchanges and in educational training spheres, among others. In the regional field, the support of Malaysia for the entry of Chile into APEC in 1993 and later to access the TAC of ASEAN to become Development Partner have been decisive. After signing 9 bilateral agreements, a key milestone was the signing of the Chile-Malaysia Free Trade Agreement in 2010, until today is the only such agreement signed by Malaysia with a country of the American Continent, and an essential point in Chile's economic bonds with Southeast Asia. In recent years, further significant advances in other areas have been the Halal Certification (2010), the signing of the Chile-Malaysia Air Services Agreement (in force since August 2012) and Electronic Certification of Origin.

This article would be incomplete should it miss the context derived from the COVID-19 pandemic. Being the effectiveness of diplomacy solidly based in its discreet work, it is little known its role in benefit of the people. When Chileans abroad face a situation of vulnerability, an inexhaustible work of Consulates and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is activated, through the General Directorate of Consular Affairs, to assist or to repatriate our compatriots. Between March and July 2020, more than 200.000 Chilean and foreign residents in our country returned to Chile assisted by the Foreign Affairs Ministry and Consulates, as a high efficiency outcome from an unheard-of global emergency and confirming the importance of the human side in the delivery of consular support.



These two photos can show the city of Santiago of Chile (left hand) and Kuala Lumpur (right hand).





A BRIEF OF THE LONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND MALAYSIA



The official visit of the President of the Republic of Colombia, Andres Pastrana Arango, in 2001, was proof of the positive momentum in the Colombia Malaysia bilateral relations at that time.

THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA IN MALAYSIA

Colombia and Malaysia formally established diplomatic relations on August 1987, and continue strengthening their important ties by consolidating them in multilateral fora such as the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Colombia's entrance to PECC was a reality in large part thanks to the support of the Malaysian Government in 1994. Regarding NAM, its Heads of State Summit held in Colombia in 1995 also played an important part in the establishment of a diplomatic mission. The Embassy of Colombia was opened in Kuala Lumpur in 1997. The common understandings in matters of agroindustry were the main subjects handled by the Embassy in the latter part of the 1990's.

This was led by the interest shown by Colombian public and private sector, to learn from the experience of Malaysia regarding their oil palm industry. This gave way to the establishment of technical and scientific cooperation projects of common interest, mainly in subjects of oil palm crop management and seed production. The official visit of the President of the Republic of Colombia Andres Pastrana Arango in 2001, was proof of the positive momentum in the Colombia Malaysia bilateral relations at that time.

This visit gave both sides the opportunity to renovate its signed mechanisms such as the Accord between Colombia and Malaysia in matters of Commerce and pave the way to sign the Accord on Cooperation in Economic, Scientific, Technical Education and Cultural Matters between the Republic of Colombia and Malaysia. The creation of the Embassy of Colombia in Malaysia without a doubt has contributed to a strong bilateral relationship. It has been 26 years of political, economic, trade and cultural exchange that bring our people together by the willingness of its governments in enhancing their presence in South East Asia and South America, respectively.



THE STRONGER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUBA AND MALAYSIA

THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA IN MALAYSIA

Legend has it that when Christopher Columbus landed in Cuba, he described it as "the most beautiful land that human eyes have seen." The Republic of Cuba archipelago is made up of its main island (similar in size to peninsular Malaysia and the largest in the Caribbean), the Isle of Youth and more than 4 thousand islets and keys. It is located 150 km south of Florida, USA, (same as KL to Malacca). Cuba has emblematic beaches such as Varadero, catalogued among the best beaches in the globe, as well as mountains. With a population of 11.3 million, its cities are renown, starting with Havana, where music, dance, history, traditions and culture combines with the defining characteristic of Cubans: musical and gregarious.

There is no Cuban street without music and laughter. Its inhabitants prefer salsa, casino, merengue and son to animate parties, gatherings and daily activities. The well-preserved cultural heritage bonds seamlessly with 1940-50's cars maintained and refurbished as a true testimony of Cuban's indomitable spirit and resourcefulness, something that has allowed them to withstand 50 years of economic siege from the US. Its Habanos cigars, alongside with rum cocktails Mojito and Cuba Libre, are famous and a symbol all over the world. Today Cuba is also famous for its achievements in the areas of health and biotechnology.

With the world highest ratio of 9 doctors per 1000 people, Cuba has sent thousands of doctors to other countries in solidarity, and has developed advanced drugs such as lung cancer vaccines, or its own vaccines against Covid-19. Dozens of Malaysians have benefited from fully funded Medicine scholarships in Cuba, where education and health care are universal, free of charge, and of excellence. Cuba established diplomatic relations with Malaysia in 1975, and opened its Embassy in KL in 1997.



*Official meeting
between Tun Dr.
Muhammad
Mahathir and
Former President of
Cuba Mr. Fidel
Castro.*



Arrival of Ambassador Jorge Efren Dominguez to the Ceremony of Presentation of the Letter of Credence. Malaysia 1991.
(Photo courtesy of Ambassador Dominguez)

THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES IN MALAYSIA

The bilateral relation Mexico-Malaysia started soon after the formation of Malaysia in 1963. There were conversations in Washington in 1966 between Ambassador of Malaysia, Tan Sri Ong Yoke Lin, and Ambassador of Mexico Hugo B. Margain. The decision of initiating formal links between both countries was taken on March 27th, 1974, when Malaysia and Mexico formally established diplomatic relations. Mexico was represented to Malaysia by Its Ambassador in Indonesia, and Malaysia by Its Ambassador in Washington. In March 1982, Ambassador Juan Manuel Ramírez Gómez travelled to Kuala Lumpur to present his Letters of Credence to H.M. the Yang di PertuanAgong, Ahmad Shah Al-MustainBillah.

In 1984 Malaysia demonstrated its special interest in Mexico by inviting the Ambassador of Mexico to Indonesia, Guillermo Corona Muñoz, to the Coronation Ceremony of H.M. the Yang di PertuanAgong Sultan Iskandar (the eight Yang di PertuanAgongDuli Yang MahaMuliaBaginda Sultan Iskandar ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Ismail).

During the 1990s, Malaysia and Mexico were recognized leaders among the developing countries, and with strategic roles in their respective regions.

When Ambassador of Mexico to Indonesia, Jesús Domene presented his Letters of Credence, he could exchange views with the Yang di PertuanAgong, H.E. AzlanMujibbuddin Shah, regarding the convenience of opening an Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

In the end, the Embassy of Mexico in Kuala Lumpur was opened on August 3rd, 1991 and, on October 31st, 1991, Jorge Efrén Domínguez was appointed Ambassador of Mexico to Malaysia. Soon after, in 1992, Malaysia opened its Embassy in Mexico City. The presence of these representations stimulated our bilateral relations in the following years.



*Arrival of
Ambassador Jorge
Efren Dominguez to
the ceremony of
presentation of
letter of credence,
Malaysia 1991.*



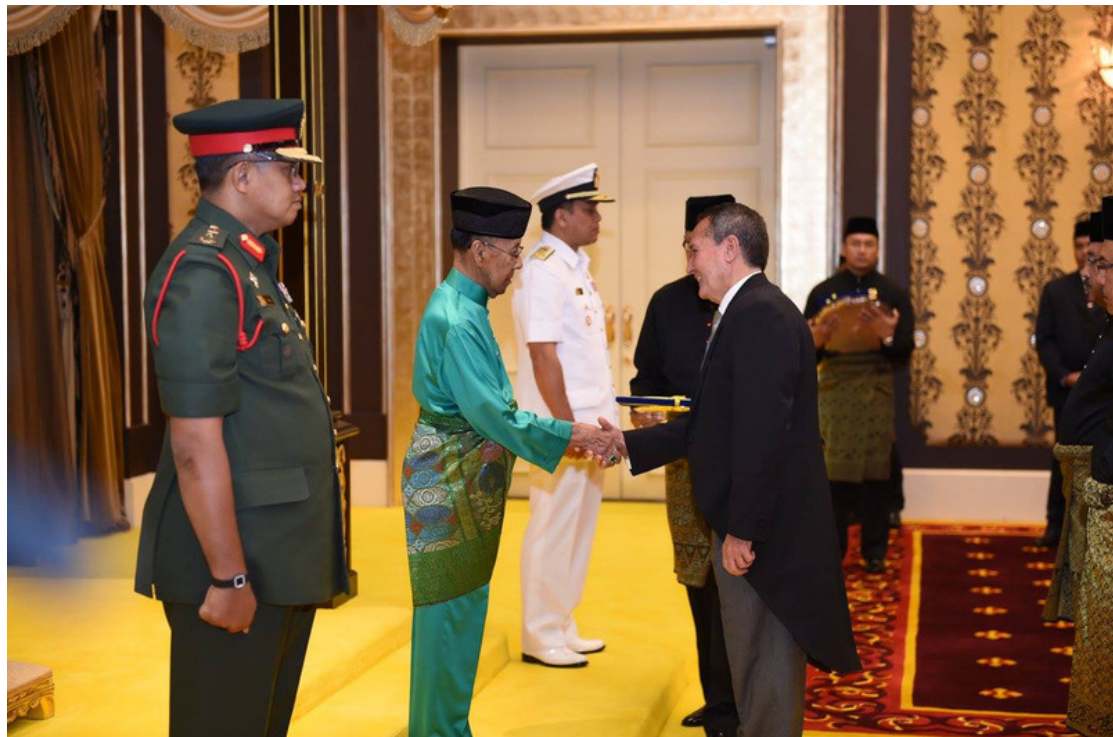
THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF PERU IN MALAYSIA

Diplomatic relations started in 1986. Peru established its Embassy in Kuala Lumpur in 1992, Malaysia did so in Lima in 1996. Bilateral relations expanded and cooperation increased through multilateralism: Forum for East Asia-Latin American Cooperation (FEALAC), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), signatories of Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Peru is located in western South America (1.28 million km²), it borders north Ecuador and Colombia, east Brazil, southeast Bolivia, south Chile and west the Pacific Ocean. In 1995, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad visited Peru in an official visit. In 1998, President Alberto Fujimori visited Malaysia to attend APEC Leaders' Summit. As megadiverse country its habitats range from deserts on the 3,000 km Pacific coast, Andes mountains peaks from northwest to southeast, tropical Amazon rainforest in the east, hosting 28 out of 32 world climates. Its 32 million population includes native, European, African, Asian descendants. Main spoken language is Spanish, followed by Quechua, Aymara and many dialects, with a mixture of wide diversity of expressions in art, cuisine, literature, and music. Peruvian territory harbored several ancient cultures, ranging from Caral in 3,500 BCE, one of the cradles of civilization (oldest in Americas), to the Inca Empire (c.XVI CE), the largest state in the pre-Columbian era.

Peru proclaimed independence from Spanish Empire in 1821. It celebrates 200 years as a republic this year. Peru is a democratic, social, independent and sovereign country divided into 25 regions. As a developing country, it ranks 79th on UN Human Development Index (2020) with an upper middle-income level (2020). One of the region's most prosperous economies with an average growth rate of 4.0% (2018) by World Bank. Main economic activities include mining, agriculture, fishing and thriving gastro-tourism industry, considered best culinary destination from 2012 to 2019. During latest years Peru showed stable macroeconomic foundations, openness to global integration. Active member of APEC, CPTPP, Pacific Alliance (AP) and World Trade Organization (WTO); it is considered as a middle power.



Ambassador Guido Loayza delivering his letter of credence to the then Yang di-Pertuan Agong Abdul Halim (2015).





A SHORT BRIEF ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN URUGUAY AND MALAYSIA



*The official visit of
the former President
of the Republic of
Uruguay Mr.
Tabaré Vázquez to
Malaysia.*

THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY IN MALAYSIA

Uruguay set up its embassy in 1994 in a big house located in Jalan Taman U Thant, followed by a short stay in the Taman TAR area. During the 1990s there was a tangible dynamism in the bilateral relationship. High-level exchanges took place, illustrated by then Prime Minister Mahatir's visit to Montevideo, and former Presidents Sanguinetti and Vázquez official visits to Kuala Lumpur. In addition, the King of Malaysia and other executive authorities visited Uruguay during those years. In the late 1990s, the Asian crisis and the financial debacle in the Río de la Plata, were elements that did not contribute to maintaining the bilateral agenda as a high priority. However, in the first 10 years of this 21st century, the relationship has once again intensified.

The Diplomatic offices of Uruguay in Malaysia were closed between 2003 and 2005 due to the financial crisis in our country, and subsequently Ambassador Pablo Sader reopened the diplomatic mission in the place where it is located to this day, on the sixth floor of UBN Tower.

Uruguay is a place that has football as one of its most important socio-cultural activities, and it is common to make associations about events, people and places due to that sport. That is one of the many ways in which we are intertwined with Malaysia. The 1997 FIFA World Youth Championship that was organized here is very fondly remembered because our country was the first runner-up, after many years of not having obtained any title at that level. Therefore Malaysia, and its internationally-renowned Petronas Towers, are the first things that come to mind when Uruguayans think of Southeast Asia.



*Copyright © 2021 University of Malaya (UM)-
Centre of Latin American Studies (CLAS) and
GRULAC-Malaysia*

*Level 19, Wisma R&D, University of Malaya,
Jalan Pantai Baharu*

E-Mail: clas.unimalaya@um.edu.my

Tel: +603-2246-3501



NEWSLETTER CLAS-GRULAC

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1
AUTHORED BY: CENTRE OF
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
(CLAS) - UNIVERSITY OF
MALAYA
AND GRULAC-MALAYSIA