



No.04 V.01 DIC 2022

## Mexico-Singapur: Strategic Alliance

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## Message from the Ambassador

On 22nd December 2022, Mexico and Singapore commemorate 47 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations, which began just 10 years after this young nation gained its independence.

As our Foreign Minister, Marcelo Ebrard, recently mentioned, in just 57 years Singapore has become a highly successful city-state, excelling globally in the fields of logistics and finance, innovation and technology, education, transparency and good governance.

But our shared history goes back a long way. On his Official Visit to Mexico in 2019, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong shared an anecdote that surprised everyone.

Two centuries ago, the British Thomas Stamford Raffles founded the port of Singapore through an agreement with the Sultan of Johor, which involved financial remuneration in coins minted in Mexican silver.

This fascinating history also reminds us of the route that, thanks to the Acapulco-Manila galleon, connected Asia, America and Europe between the 16th and 19th centuries, with Mexico as the axis mundi. This route, one of the first examples of economic globalisation and cross-fertilisation between cultures, is renewed with the forthcoming incorporation of Singapore as the first associate state of the Pacific Alliance, with Mexico, once again, as the axis between the most economically and commercially dynamic regions in the world: Southeast Asia and North America.

Separated by distance, our countries are growing closer.

On that official visit, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and Premier Lee pledged to boost our relationship to the level of a strategic and wide-ranging partnership.

This year, the fifth meeting of the Mechanism for Bilateral Political Consultations, co-chaired by Mexico's Under-Secretary Carmen Moreno Toscano, was an effort of strategic engagement and high-level political dialogue.

Singapore today has in Mexico one of its main trade, innovation and cooperation partners in Latin America.

Bilateral trade amounts to 5.3 billion dollars and the City-State is the only country in Asia-Pacific with which we have a surplus trade balance.

Mexico and Singapore have been active members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) for nearly 30 years. Both nations were the first to sign the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership, which entered into force in 2018 and governs our economic-trade relationship.

Singaporean companies and investment funds are successfully engaged in Mexico in global value chains, agribusiness, logistics, technology and innovation, energy, hospitality, digital economy and financial services.

Recently, the two governments and the business community established the first Singapore-Mexico Chamber of Commerce to increase investment, trade, innovation and supply chain flows between the two nations.

In terms of cooperation, we cover the areas of energy; innovation and technology; Fintech; environment; digitalisation and artificial intelligence; food security; global value chains; smart cities and sustainable urbanism; Industry 4.0, aerospace and cyber security.

In 2022 Singapore dressed up as Mexico.

We held a successful exhibition at the iconic Gardens by the Bay botanical garden, with a display of our pre-Hispanic architecture and botany with the magnificent orchid-covered pyramid of Chichen Itza at the centre.

The great Olmec head, the extraordinary Chac Mool, the Atlanteans of Tula and Quetzalcoatl, the codices De la Cruz Badiano, Tonalamatl, Maya and Dresde, reproductions of emblematic pieces from the Museum of Anthropology and History, samples of creole corn, authentic archaeological jewels of our agriculture and an arch with more than 55 thousand multicoloured flowers welcomed more than 205 thousand visitors.

Also, for the third year in a row, we celebrated the Day of the Dead at the iconic National Museum, with an exhibition featuring the monarch butterfly as the central character and metaphor for Mexican migrants.

In these 47 years, Singapore and Mexico have built a trans-oceanic friendship, and with the good wind of cooperation and innovation, they will continue to sail together towards a hopeful and strengthened bilateral relationship.

## Mexico, Singapore and Pacific Alliance move closer together

# Singapore, Mexico chambers ink deal to boost links

**Pact signed at Pacific Alliance summit amid call to tap green, digitalisation tailwinds**

**Sofia Hanna Romero**  
For The Straits Times

MEXICO CITY – For some 250 years, from 1565 to 1815, Spanish galleons would sail between Acapulco in Mexico and Manila in the Philippines, trading exotic goods.

After over 200 years, trade links between South-east Asia and Latin America are being renewed.

Earlier in 2022, Singapore became the first associate state of the Pacific Alliance (PA), which comprises Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Peru, and a free trade pact was sealed between Singapore and the PA.

Now, Ecuador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Canada and South Korea have expressed their interest in joining the alliance.

Said Mexico's Foreign Minister

Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon at the recent Pacific Alliance Business Summit in Mexico City: "The Pacific Alliance is working, and we have a great deal of activity. The alliance will continue to grow."

Singapore's Minister of State for Trade and Industry Alvin Tan, who attended the summit, compared the alliance to the galleons that sailed between Acapulco Bay and Manila.

"All the countries involved are ships that should take advantage of the green and digital tailwinds," he said, noting that Singapore has joined the fleet as the fifth ship.

Digitalisation will allow the PA to better connect members, while the green tailwind – sustainability – will enable countries to fight climate change, he said.

"On the digital front, we have signed many good agreements

with members of the PA, which will allow businesses to connect across borders easily. We hope to share the connections developed in South-east Asia and bring them here to share," he added.

A joint work plan between Singapore and the PA outlines initiatives both sides want to work on together in four areas – digital, innovation and technology; the environment and sustainability; logistics, connectivity and trade facilitation; and people and business links – said Mr Tan.

At the summit, the newly formed Singapore-Mexico Chamber of Commerce (SGMXCHAM) and the Mexican Business Council for Foreign Trade, Investment and Technology also signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance links between both countries.

The chambers will encourage the exchange of trade delegations, set up a network to share business opportunities in both countries with their members, and encourage the exchange of technical expertise,



Mexico's Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon said at a recent summit that the Pacific Alliance (PA) will continue to grow. Earlier in 2022, Singapore became the first associate state of the PA, which comprises Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Peru, and a free trade pact was sealed between Singapore and the group. PHOTO: AFP

know-how and training opportunities.

SGMXCHAM board director Francisco Rios said the pact "will allow us to better identify, encourage and facilitate partnerships between Singaporean and Mexican companies".

"At the same time, we now have a combined deep local knowledge in both countries that allows us to help companies soft land more effectively."

The agreement foresees reciprocal trade missions in sectors identified as having potential, which include agribusiness, food and beverage, hospitality, manufacturing, IT and digital innovation, financial services, infrastructure, logistics and trade.

At a panel discussion, Chile's Deputy Minister for Finance Claudia Sanhueza said: "Investments are necessary for a productive transition towards sustainability, technology, high-value industries and taking advantage of the opportunities that the country can offer to the world."

"We believe that the alliance offers an opportunity for countries to commit 100 per cent to policies and exchanges that improve our future."

But the ships Mr Tan cited might encounter a tsunami of difficulties ahead, according to Peru's Vice-Minister for Economy and Finance Alex Alonso Contreras.

However, the ministers agreed that digitalisation, sustainability,

and collaboration in attracting more resources and gaining investor confidence will help PA members better position themselves in the global context.

Said Mr Tan: "Latin America is a dynamic and diverse region set for fast growth. There is vibrant economic activity and continuous high demand that withstood global challenges."

He added: "Singapore's growing relations with the Pacific Alliance mean strengthening of links between two burgeoning regions – Latin America and South-east Asia. This gives us more options which is crucial for economic resilience. It also brings new opportunities for business partnership and projects."

Singapore's largest circulation newspaper, The Straits Times, published an extensive article this month that refers to the strengthening of Mexico-Singapore relations, as well as the opportunities that are envisaged in the short and medium term as a result of Singapore's imminent incorporation as the first partner state of the Pacific Alliance.

It highlights the statements made by Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon, to the effect that "the Pacific Alliance is working and will continue to grow". In line with this, Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry, Alvin Tan, pointed out that on the digital front Singapore has signed agreements with Pacific Alliance members that will allow businesses more and better connectivity. "We hope to share the connections developed in Southeast Asia and bring them here to share," he said.

He cited that, during the IV Meeting of the Pacific Alliance Business Council the COMCE and Singapore-Mexico Chamber of Commerce signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

[Link](#)



## Receipt of copy of Letters of Credence of the non-resident Ambassador of Singapore to Mexico



The Ambassador received at this Embassy a copy of the Letters of Credence of Gerald Balendran Singham, as Singapore's Non-Resident Ambassador to our country, a position conferred on him by the President of Singapore Halima Yakob on 25th October. This protocolary event precedes the official ceremony that will take place in Mexico City in the first months of 2023, in which Mr Gerald Balendran Singham will present the original Letters of Credence to President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to formalise his mission. In his speech, Ambassador-designate expressed the importance of the bilateral relationship and the convergence of principles and values of both countries in multilateral fora such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Pacific Alliance and the Pacific Alliance-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. He stressed that one of his priorities is to strengthen trade and investment ties with Mexico and the region, as well as to strengthen educational, technical and scientific cooperation and expand it in new emerging sectors such as the digital economy and clean energy.

Ambassador García-López highlighted that in 2022 Mexico and Singapore consolidated their strategic relationship and political dialogue initiated by the leaders of both countries themselves, with the presence in Singapore of Undersecretary Carmen Moreno Toscano, on the occasion of the 5th Meeting of the Bilateral Political Consultations Mechanism, and the two visits to our country by Alvin Tan, Minister for Trade and Industry and Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, on the occasion of the signing of the Singapore-Pacific Alliance Joint Work Plan (2022-2027) and the Council of Ministers Meeting of the XVII Summit of the Pacific Alliance.

During Ambassador García-López address, he emphasised to Ambassador Balendran Singham the Mexican Government's interest for Singapore to establish a permanent embassy in our country to vigorously and effectively promote political dialogue and economic, educational, scientific, cultural and innovation cooperation programmes.

It is worth noting that Singapore widely uses the figure of Non-Resident Ambassador. The diplomat continues living and working in Singapore while travelling regularly to Mexico to fulfil the powers and functions conferred by local legislation and the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.





## Educational cooperation with UNAM headquarters in China

On 19 December, Ambassador García-López Loaeza and Embassy staff held a videoconference with the director of the UNAM headquarters in China, Dr. Adalberto Noyola and his team to explore collaboration schemes between the National Autonomous University of Mexico and academic institutions in Singapore in the fields of medicine and engineering. As a result of the meeting, meetings will be held between university authorities to explore opportunities for student mobility, academic exchange, the promotion of joint projects and academic publications between UNAM and the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU).



## Pharmaceutical companies to set up shop in Singapore

The Straits Times reported this month that over the past two years, five pharmaceutical companies have committed to setting up plants in Singapore to produce more than one billion doses a year. Prior to the pandemic in 2019, there were no pharmaceutical plants producing vaccines. The new inputs to be produced range from traditional types, such as live attenuated and recombinant vaccines, to messenger Ribonucleic Acid (mRNA) and the first production will be launched in 2023.

The sudden influx of investment can largely be attributed to lessons learned during the pandemic. Pharmaceutical companies discovered that when there is a critical need for vaccines, normal market rules do not apply, as was evident when several countries blocked vaccine exports.





## Traveler's guide

### Guía del Viajero



#### Aquí encontrarás:

- ✈ Alertas y avisos de viaje.
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  - ▶ Requisitos de entrada y salida
  - ▶ Leyes y costumbres
- ✈ Recomendaciones para tener un viaje seguro y sin contratiempos.



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