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Embassy of Colombia in the United States

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Ambassador Pinzón Talks Innovation and SMEs at 1776

Washington, DC — Ahead of next week's Global Entrepreneurship Congress (GEC) in Medellín, Colombian Ambassador to the United States Juan Carlos Pinzón today delivered remarks during a fireside chat on "Connecting the SME Global Ecosystems" at business incubator 1776.

The Ambassador shared how Colombia is cultivating entrepreneurship and innovation among small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including through partnerships with U.S. institutions and organizations.

"During the last quarter of 2015, the National Learning Service, SENA, which, over the past 10 years has supported the creation of more than 4,500 new businesses and 17,000 direct jobs in over 600 municipalities, has doubled down on entrepreneurship by signing two important agreements with key U.S. actors," said Ambassador Pinzón.

Those partners include MassChallenge, an accelerator based in Massachusetts with one of the most highly-leveraged job-creation programs in the world. MassChallenge will help modernize Colombia's National Entrepreneurship Fund and curate the highest-impact ideas generated by Colombian entrepreneurs. In addition, a landmark agreement with the University of Texas at San Antonio will support Colombia's efforts to scale up U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) business development centers nationwide in SENA's 117 entrepreneurship centers. This would create in Colombia the largest small business support network in the entire region.

"Together with these efforts, innovation hubs such as Ruta N continue attracting new talent and investments to Colombia, and programs such as iNNPulsa and Apps.co are fostering economic growth and development," the Ambassador concluded.

The Ambassador participated in the event alongside U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet, 1776 Co-Founder and Co-CEO Donna Harris and Global Entrepreneurship Network President Jonathan Ortman. Contreras-Sweet is leading a U.S. delegation to Medellín, both for the GEC and the Global SME Ministerial, and that group will include Harris and Ortman.

For more information on the GEC in Medellín, March 14-17, click [here](#).

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