

Connected, creative and cool

By H.E. FEDERICO ALBERTO CUELLO CAMILO

AMBASSADOR OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED KINGDOM



FEDERICO CUELLO was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Dominican Republic to the United Kingdom in July 2011. Prior to his appointment, he was Ambassador to the United Nations in New York (2009-11), and has also served as Ambassador to Belgium, the European Union, the Czech Republic and Poland (2005-09), and to the UN and WTO in Geneva (1999-2002). Among his other official duties, he served as Vice-Minister of Economics for International Cooperation (1995-99) and as an Economic Advisor to the Chamber of Deputies (2003-04).

This world is for those who are connected. With access. With multiple ways to get from here to there. With the fastest means to communicate. The DR fits the bill perfectly.

With 15 ports, including DP-World Caucedo, the DR is already the transshipment point – the hub – for the Caribbean and Central America.

With 10 airports, including Punta Cana International Airport – the largest in the Caribbean, connecting non-stop to over 40 destinations – the DR is serving already as the air transport hub for fresh produce exported from South America to Europe.

With the densest road network in Western Hemisphere, quick and reliable access – to over 48,000km² of territory – is ensured.

With treaty-level links granting free trade in goods and services to the two largest markets in the world – the EU and the US – as well as trade agreements with Caribbean and Central-American Countries, the DR is the base already for a very diversified gamut of exports, from electronics to jewellery, from the largest world market-share of high-quality cigars, to the most efficient operation of textiles and apparel manufacturing in the region.

And with the most advanced telecoms infrastructure in the region, including the Network Access Point (NAP) of the Caribbean and full service provision of 4G-LTE mobile technologies, the DR is being eyed for its potential as a hub for European financial activities in the Americas.

This world is for those who are creative. Whether in the arts or the sciences, to innovate is to influence the ways of the future by setting the trends others will follow. And in this, the DR is no slouch.

With world-class creative individuals, Dominicans such as Michel Camilo – a Latin-Jazz virtuoso composer and performer – and Juan Luis Guerra – the poet composer and performer of bachatas and merengues – combine between them more international awards than any other Latin-American or Caribbean country. Their recordings, together with those produced by so many of their fellow composers and performers, dominate the charts wherever good Latin music is appreciated.

Another Dominican, Oscar de la Renta, was able – over five decades as the most sophisticated fashion designer Latin America has ever produced – to succeed,

first in Europe, then in the US and later back in Paris, leaving behind a fashion empire that is second to none.

With world-class creative industries, the DR is already the location of choice for European film and TV production. INDOMINA Studios, a joint venture between the UK's Pinewood Studios and the DR's VICINI Group, is the most salient recent development capitalising on decades of investment in human resources, supported now by an enabling legal framework with a similar incentive structure to that adopted with great success in the UK.

This world is for those who can strive in the most difficult of conditions, daring to face the elements, the adversities of life or the vicissitudes of an uncertain world.

In a country in the hurricane belt – sitting also on the Caribbean tectonic plate – Dominicans know how to live – and to survive – in the presence of risk, with an architecture that is not only safe but also distinctly unique for its use of local materials.

A country of unrivaled beauty – whose natural and urban landscapes are the locations of choice for video clips, films and TV programmes.

Dominicans do know how to achieve results – labour productivity has grown exponentially over the last 20 years while wages have remained stable – without ever forgetting to take it easy.

Dominicans are an ethnically-diverse, socially-integrated and fully multicultural people, originating from 116 different countries. No wonder we are the friendliest in the region.

A country with a government that is investing 4 per cent of GDP in education while attacking poverty at its source – with a focus on sustainable rural development and promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – entrepreneurship is no longer confined to those with access to capital but to all with a product with a market. No wonder the DR registers consistently the highest rates of annual GDP growth of the Americas, averaging about 7 per cent since 1992.

A country with the largest tourism infrastructure in the Caribbean and Central America, in 2014 the DR became the top destination in the region and is scheduled to meet its target of 10 million tourists by 2020. Over 5.5 million tourists visited us in 2014. Of these, over 90 per cent were repeat visitors.

We must be doing something right. Could it be because we are the coolest country?

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