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Hoet Pelaez Castillo & Duque traces its origin to 1942 and is one of the oldest, largest and prestigious full-service law firm in the country. The firm is well-known for its Commercial and Intellectual Property Practice, the latter being one of the largest in Venezuela. The scope of its client base is worldwide, with a broader base in the American, European and Asian continents. It serves many of Venezuela's top-of-the-line private companies along with a large number of foreign companies operating in different commercial and industrial sectors and financial institutions doing business in the country.

The professional services rendered by the firm cover the following main areas of practice: Contracts, Mergers and Acquisitions; Energy, Natural Resources, Utilities and Public Services; Trade, Investments, Finance and Competition; Exchange Control Regulations; Taxation; Labor, Employment and Employee Benefits; Telecommunications, Information Technology and E-Commerce; Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution.

The firm also has specialists to provide services on: Insurance, which covers Maritime, Aviation and Multimodal Insurance; Environmental Law; Entertainment; Real Estate; Transportation (Aviation and Maritime); Consumer Protection; Registries and Notaries; Tourism; and Immigration.

Throughout the years, Hoet Pelaez Castillo & Duque has represented clients in major merger and acquisitions; joint ventures; in project financing for public and private projects and large contract negotiations with public and private corporations.

Hoet Pelaez Castillo & Duque continues to be a leader within intellectual property practices in Latin America, focusing on: Patents, Trademarks, Models, Designs and Geographical Indications; Copyrights and Neighboring Rights; Domain Names; Licensing, Franchising and Merchandising; and Unfair Competition. As an acknowledgement to the quality of its services, Hoet Pelaez Castillo & Duque has been the first and only firm in Venezuela to obtain the Covenin—ISO 9001:2000 quality certificate.

Most of its fee earners, including its partners, speak English and others speak French. A large number of its professionals have studied abroad, giving them an international perspective on business and allowing the firm to provide global counseling of quality and reliability, both to our local and our international clients.

Hoet Pelaez Castillo & Duque's main office is located in Caracas, Venezuela's political, economic and cultural heart, and has correspondents in the largest Venezuelan cities, including Barquisimeto, Maturín, Puerto Ordaz, Puerto Cabello, Puerto La Cruz and Valencia.

*For further information about Hoet Peláez Castillo & Duque, please visit our web site or contact **Franklin Hoet-Linares** or **Fernando Peláez-Pier**.*