

Dear Sir / Madam,

It gives me great pleasure to send you the second issue of my personal newsletter “Japan Now”. In this issue, I wish to inform you on the following topics:

- 1. Summary of Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2014 as well as the 50th Anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Japan and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**
- 2. Japan’s assistance in response to Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak in West African countries**
- 3. National Day Reception on the occasion of the 81st birthday of His Majesty Emperor AKIHITO of Japan**

Let me take this opportunity to express my best wishes to you all for the good health and a happy Christmas and New Year!

- 1. Summary of Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2014 as well as the 50th Anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Japan and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

This year 2014 marked Japan – CARICOM Friendship Year as well as the 50th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Japan. These important milestones present us with the opportunity to reflect on our shared past and to plot a course for the future based on the strong foundation we have laid together.

Prime Minister Abe’s visit to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

This commemorative year was highlighted by the very first visit by a Japanese Prime Minister to the Caribbean region when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe paid a visit in July to Trinidad and Tobago. During his visit, Prime Minister Abe held the first Japan-CARICOM Summit as well as bilateral meetings with each CARICOM member state. In the Summit, Mr. Abe announced his policy towards CARICOM and stated that Japan



would conduct field surveys on future cooperation, taking into account the “vulnerabilities particular to small island states” that CARICOM member states have been facing and the importance of providing support from perspectives other than those based on per-capita income.

More details: http://www.mofa.go.jp/la_c/crb/page22e_000474.html

The Fourth Japan-CARICOM Ministerial-Level Conference

Foreign ministers and other officials from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states were invited to Tokyo on November 14 and 15 to participate in the Fourth Japan-CARICOM Ministerial-Level Conference. The participating countries held discussions in line with the three pillars of Japan's CARICOM policies announced by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in July. Following the Conference, the Japan-CARICOM Joint Ministerial Statement was adopted.

Foreign Minister Kishida demonstrated that the issues raised at the First Japan-CARICOM Summit Meeting in July were being followed up steadily. Surveys are currently being carried out in the renewable energy and energy conservation fields, which are essential to overcoming the vulnerabilities particular to small island developing states. This was highly appreciated by the CARICOM side.



Bearing in mind the debate on the post-2015 development agenda, and in order to raise funds for development, the CARICOM member states asked that Japan, as a donor, speak for CARICOM, so that CARICOM could obtain highly concessional funding that take into account the vulnerabilities particular to small island developing states and they expressed high expectations toward Japan.

Various important challenges facing the international community were discussed, including UN Security Council reform and climate change in the lead up to 2015, an important year for the international community, and Japan was able to promote understanding and support for Japan's views on various issues. At the same time, Japan demonstrated to CARICOM its determination to take into consideration CARICOM's views.

Various exchanges

The 50th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations is not only an acknowledgement of the enduring ties between our two countries but also a testament to the success of the various cultural exchanges of our countries such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme and Japanese government Scholarships. More than 80 Trinidadian youths have participated in the JET Programme since it started in 1987, and we expect more participants in the years to come.

As we are aware that drumming is very popular and deeply rooted in the society here in Trinidad and Tobago, I invited a master of *wadaiko*, or Japanese drum, to make a performance here in Trinidad and Tobago in October this year to highlight the cultural exchange of this Friendship Year. The concert was co-hosted by the Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism, and was graced by the presence of Dr. Lincoln Douglas, Minister of Arts and Multiculturalism.

Furthermore, as part of the programs for the 50th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Trinidad and Tobago and Japan, three Japan Maritime Self Defence Force Training Vessels called on Port of Spain in July and engaged in various exchanges such as baseball and football games with the T&T Coast Guard and mini concert at Longcircular Mall by a group of Japanese drummers / crew members of the vessels .



We have seen an increase in visits by tourists and business travellers from Japan. We are pleased that Japan's business travellers are visiting our mission more often. This indicates growing interest in investment opportunities here. We hope that many Japanese businesses will become very active in T&T's business environment in the near future. We are also delighted to know that the government of Trinidad and Tobago is now considering the establishment of a trade representative "invesTT" in Tokyo, which was made public in July.

As we look ahead, we would like to maintain and expand the positive momentum that has been created through the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of our diplomatic relations and the Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year. It is my sincere hope that the partnership between our two nations grow stronger and deeper in a wide range of areas in the years to come.

2. Japan's assistance in response to Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak in West African countries

The outbreak of the Ebola virus disease continues to spread in West Africa, with a total of 15,327 cases and 5,450 deaths reported in four countries, namely Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mali (As of November 25, WHO) . Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged at the United Nations General Assembly that Japan would provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is required to secure safety of medical staff. In this regard, upon the request from these four countries, the Government of Japan decided to provide approximately 700,000 sets of PPE.

Out of the above, 20,000 sets of PPE have already been transported by a Self-Defense Forces airplane (as part of the Japan Disaster Relief Team) to Accra, the Republic of Ghana, where the headquarters of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) is based. They will be distributed to the Ebola affected countries through the UNMEER.

The Government of Japan also decided to newly extend emergency grant aid of approximately 820 million yen (8.5 million US dollars) to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

In addition, as part of Japan's contribution of human resources, Dr. Shiro Konuma, an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a medical license, will be seconded to the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) until the end of February 2015. He will be working as Senior Adviser on Ebola to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General.

Furthermore, Japan also decided to newly dispatch one medical expert to Sierra Leone via the World Health Organization (WHO), for a period of approximately one month from December 14, 2014.

3. National Day Reception

On December 9, I hosted our national day reception on the occasion of the 81st birthday of His Majesty Emperor Akihito of Japan. The reception was graced by the presence of Their Excellencies Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona, S.C. and Mrs. Reema Carmona, among other VIPs.

A variety of Japanese culture was introduced to the guests, ranging from tasting of *sake*, or Japanese alcoholic drink made from fermented rice, to *Sushi* demonstration. Some photographs from the visit by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Trinidad and Tobago were also exhibited at the reception.

Yoshimasa Tezuka
Ambassador

