

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 of the following topics:

- 1. *The Embassy of Japan Opens in Barbados***
 - 2. *Completion of Presenting Credentials to 10 Countries***
 - 3. *Climate Change: Actions for Cool Earth (ACE) 2.0, an initiative by Japan***
 - 4. *Japan Offers Emergency Grant Aid in Response to the ZIKA Virus Infection***
 - 5. *Japanese TV Programme "Carnation" Aired***
 - 6. *Kumamoto Earthquake***
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1. *The Embassy of Japan Opens in Barbados*

The Embassy of Japan in Barbados was opened on 1 January 2016. In commemoration of its opening, Taiko Masala, a U.S. based taiko (Japanese drum) group, gave a concert performance at the Frank Collymore Hall in Barbados on 17 February 2016. The concert was attended by distinguished guests, including the Honourable Richard Sealy, acting Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honourable Stephen Lashley, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, and Dr. DeLisle Worrell, Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados.

A Cocktail Reception was also held on 9 March 2016 at the Hilton Hotel to mark the opening of the Embassy. My wife, Mari OKADA, and I hosted this reception which was attended by about 90 guests, including His Excellency Sir Elliott Fitzroy Belgrave, the Governor General of Barbados, and other dignitaries, such as Senator the Honourable Maxine McClean, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Honourable Richard Llewellyn Sealy, Minister of Tourism and International Transport, and the Honourable Michael Lashley, Minister of Transport and Works.

I gave welcome remarks, followed by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Honourable Maxine McClean, who delivered the feature address on behalf of the Government of Barbados.

On this occasion, the former Honorary Consul-General for Japan, Mr. Wayne Kirton, was also recognized for his many years of service. A certificate of commendation from His Excellency Fumio KISHIDA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, was presented to Mr. Kirton.

2. Completion of Presenting Credentials to 10 Countries

Starting with Trinidad and Tobago in August 2015, I completed presenting my credentials to all of the 10 countries which I am accredited to (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago) in February 2016. Through those visits, I got acquainted with many wonderful people and magnificent natural beauty of the Caribbean countries. These visits have strengthened my resolve to further the collaboration between the 10 countries and Japan.

3. Climate Change: Actions for Cool Earth (ACE) 2.0, an initiative by Japan

Japan, as a proactive contributor to world peace and as a nation with many small islands, has been active in tackling climate change issues. In his address at the COP21 summit meeting in Paris in November 2015, His Excellency Shinzo ABE, Prime Minister of Japan, called on both developed and developing nations to join together to protect the earth – humankind’s only homeland – for future generations by building a new framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

At the COP21, which saw the adoption of a new legal framework, the Paris Agreement, Japan announced **Actions for Cool Earth (ACE) 2.0**, a new initiative for supporting action in developing countries and advancement of innovative technologies to address climate change. Under ACE 2.0, Japan will provide ¥1.3 trillion, the equivalent of around US\$12 billion, in climate finance to developing nations in 2020. This new initiative covers renewable energy production, resilient infrastructure, and a variety of other mitigation efforts, as well as helping these countries achieve their own commitments.

Technological innovation, the second component of ACE 2.0, will be the key for action against climate change without sacrificing economic growth. In April 2016, the Japanese government established “Energy and Environment Innovation Strategy”, identifying prospective areas of innovative technology which would greatly contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Japan will promote research and development activities for energy system integration technologies and its element technologies such as innovative energy saving, next-generation rechargeable batteries, and next-generation renewable power generation systems.

4. Japan Offers Emergency Grant Aid in response to the Zika Virus Infection

On 26 February, 2016, the Government of Japan decided to extend Emergency Grant Aid of one million US dollars through the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in response to the Zika virus infection.

This emergency grant aid mainly focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean region, where serious humanitarian needs are growing by the increase in the number of patients associated with the Zika virus infection. The grant aid is assisting with the measures taken to gather information of the infection, improve the treatment of pregnant women, raise awareness to prevent infection and improve the situation of water and sanitation in the region.

5. *Japanese TV Programme “Carnation” Aired*

Since 14 March 2016, the Japanese TV drama series “Carnation” has been aired on weekdays at 14:30-15:00 on TV6 in Trinidad and Tobago with English dubbing. “Carnation” is a story of Itoko engaged in the fashion industry in the early 20th century, while raising three daughters, who would go on to become internationally renowned fashion designers – Hiroko KOSHINO, Junko KOSHINO and Michiko KOSHINO. The drama is scheduled to be on air until early July 2016.

6. *Kumamoto Earthquake*

In April 2016, a series of strong earthquakes hit Kumamoto in the southern part of Japan, causing casualties and material damages. I would like to take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation for all the messages of condolence we have received from Caribbean nations. The Japanese government is taking all necessary measures to restore the livelihood of the affected people and to repair damaged infrastructure as soon as possible. Travel trips for visiting Kumamoto are provided in the website of the Japan Tourism Agency (<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eq/kumamoto.html>).

Mitsuhiko OKADA
Ambassador of Japan