

## **The Embassy of Japan Hosts UNESCO's Closing Reception on Workshop for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**

On July 1, 2013, the Embassy of Japan in collaboration with the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean hosted a closing reception at the official residence of His Excellency Yoshimasa Tezuka, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to mark the end of the “National Workshop on Community-based Inventorying (CBI) for the Implementation of the 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage” which was held in Trinidad during June 22 – July 1, 2013.

The reception was held to honour the participants who partook in the 10-day workshop which brought together community practitioners, government officials and members of non-governmental organizations. The workshop was part of a sub-regional project being implemented by the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean in Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago within the context of UNESCO's Global Strategy on capacity building on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The project is funded by the Government of Japan and includes an assessment of the intangible cultural heritage related policy development processes in the respective countries and identification of their specific needs for safeguarding their living heritage.

Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Yoshimasa Tezuka noted that “there are various forms of intangible cultural heritage such as traditional/folk dance, music and drama, which have been handed down from generation to generation. However, due to the rapid social changes in the region, the intangible cultural heritage has been losing its original forms, and in many cases the heritage has been in danger of extinction.” He also highlighted that Japan, with its 1950 Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, was the first nation to introduce legislation to preserve and promote intangible as well as tangible culture. Thanking everyone for their commitment and cooperation, Ambassador Tezuka concluded by sharing his desire for continued future collaborations between Japan and the Caribbean region.

At the end of the evening, all the workshop participants were presented with certificates of participation by His Excellency Yoshimasa Tezuka and Dr. the Honourable Lincoln Douglas, Minister of Arts and Multiculturalism.

Among the guests who attended were Ms. Desdra Bascombe, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism; Dr. Krishendaye Rampersad, Chairperson of the Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO; Ms. Himalchuli Gurung, Culture Programme Specialist, UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean; Dr. Harriet Deacon (South Africa) and Dr. Rieks Smeets (Netherlands), International facilitators; Mr. Richard Blewitt, United Nations Resident Co-ordinator in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; Her Excellency Maureen Isabella Modiselle, High Commissioner for the Republic of South Africa, along with representatives from government and non-government institutions, universities and media personnel.

