

The Emperor's Birthday Reception 2023

On February 24, 2023, a reception to celebrate the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan was hosted by His Excellency MATSUBARA Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan and Mrs. MATSUBARA at their residence, with over 200 guests in attendance. Guests included Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs, The Honourable Mr. Justice Ivor Archie, Chief Justice, Senator the Honourable Nigel De Freitas, President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Renuka Sagramsingh-Sooklal, Minister in the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs, Senator the Honourable Muhammad Yunus Ibrahim, Vice President of the Senate, His Worship the Mayor Alderman Joel Martinez, Mayor of Port of Spain and other specially invited guests.

The Reception began with the National Anthem of Trinidad and Tobago, performed on the steelpan by students of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) followed by the Japanese National Anthem which was played on the Koto (Japanese Harp) and Steelpan, by Japanese artists Ms. Yuri Kodera and Ms. Sayori Imai, followed by speeches from Ambassador Matsubara and Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs.

In his speech, Ambassador Matsubara reflected on Japan-Trinidad & Tobago relations and stated that it is quite encouraging that Japan and Trinidad and Tobago enjoy excellent cooperative ties based on our shared universal values like democracy, the rule of law and market economy. He noted Japan and Trinidad and Tobago will celebrate its 60th anniversary of established diplomatic relations in 2024 and believes that the relations between Japan and Trinidad and Tobago would greatly benefit from the expansion of friendly ties in a wide range of areas, including economic relations, education, culture, and by enhancing engagement through the strengthening of people-to-people exchanges. He expressed his hope that Japan would soon have a Honorary Consul-General of Trinidad and Tobago in Japan, followed by the establishment of an Embassy.

Minister Browne, confirmed that Trinidad and Tobago have continued to benefit from technical cooperation through training and expertise by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), people-to-people exchanges such as the Japan Exchange and

Teaching (JET) Programme, the Monbu-kagaku-sho (MEXT) Scholarship Programme, and the Juntos!! Japan – Latin America and the Caribbean Exchange programme. He also extended his appreciation for Japan’s support to the region during the Covid-19 pandemic and the provision of grant aid and technical cooperation to CARICOM member countries for assisting with the effects of climate change and the sargassum seaweed issue.

Following the speeches, Ambassador Matsubara, Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs, and the Honourable Mr. Justice Ivor Archie, Chief Justice performed a ceremony for special occasions, which involves hammering open a wooden barrel containing sake. A tradition known as “Kagami Biraki,” which is usually observed at weddings, sporting events and other occasions worthy of celebration.

During the reception, guests were treated to activities showcasing Japanese culture, including sake tasting and video presentations from JET Alumni. Also, there were introductions in the economic field such as Expo 2025 and the Japanese Company Fujitsu. Bonsai displays were on show throughout the reception area courtesy of the Bonsai society of Trinidad and Tobago and vehicles from Toyota Trinidad and Tobago Ltd, were also on display.

*** Please visit the Embassy of Japan Website for more information on our daily activities: https://www.tt.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop_en/index.html



Ambassador Matsubara gives his remarks



Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs gives his remarks



The Honourable Mr. Justice Ivor Archie, Chief Justice, Ambassador Matsubara and Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs, perform the “Kagami Biraki,” ceremony



The Honourable Mr. Justice Ivor Archie, Chief Justice, Ambassador Matsubara and Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs, toast after the “Kagami Biraki,” ceremony



From Left to right:
Mrs. Matsubara, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs, Ms. Reita Toussaint, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and Ambassador Matsubara



JET Alumni pose with the Bonsai Tree



Students from the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) who performed at the event



Japanese artists Ms. Yuri Kodera and Ms. Sayori Imai who performed at the event