

### **National Day Reception Celebrating His Majesty the Emperor of Japan's Birthday**

On March 14th, 2025, a reception to celebrate the 65th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito, the 126th Emperor of Japan, was hosted by His Excellency Dr. Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan. Guests included Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, the Honourable Chief Justice Ivor Archie, Senator the Honourable Nigel De Freitas, the Honourable Brian Manning, Minister in the Ministry of Finance, His Worship the Mayor of Port of Spain, Mr. Chinua Alleyne, and other specially invited guests.

In his address (see below), Ambassador Umezawa expressed great pleasure in commencing his mission to strengthen the friendly relationship with the magical state of Trinidad and Tobago. He highlighted his admiration for Trinidad and Tobago's stunning natural beauty, its world-renowned magical carnival, and its status as the birthplace of steel-pan music. He also noted that he senses a shared magical harmony between the two countries and hopes to continue aspiring to new heights of amicable relations.

On behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Minister Browne extended warm wishes to His Majesty the Emperor of Japan and praised the 2024 cultural events celebrating the 60th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Trinidad and Tobago. He also highlighted the 30th anniversary of CARICOM-Japan relations, marking it as the Friendship Year. Minister Browne noted that these milestones underscore the strong ties between the countries and promote greater cultural exchange, collaboration, and mutual understanding.

During the reception, guests fully enjoyed activities showcasing Japanese culture, including sake tasting, Japanese Cuisine, and short videos introducing the upcoming EXPO 2025 held in Japan. Bonsai displays were on show throughout the reception area from the Bonsai society of Trinidad and Tobago, and a state of the art hybrid vehicle from Toyota Trinidad and Tobago Ltd, was also on display.



His Excellency Dr Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan gives his remarks.



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



His Excellency Dr Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan and Senator the Honourable Dr Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs share a toast.



His Excellency Dr Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan and Senator the Honourable Dr Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs.



From left to right: Senator the Honourable Nigel De Freitas, His Excellency Dr Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan, Senator the Honourable Dr Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs, The Honourable Brian Manning, Minister in the Ministry of Finance.



From left to right: The Honourable Chief Justice Ivor Archie, Senator the Honourable Nigel De Freitas, His Excellency Dr Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan, Senator the Honourable Dr Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs, The Honourable Brian Manning, Minister in the Ministry of Finance, His Worship the Mayor of Port of Spain, Mr. Chinua Alleyne.



His Excellency Dr Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan shares a light moment with guests.



His Excellency Dr Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan and Senator the Honourable Nigel De Freitas.



An array of traditional Japanese cuisine.



Guests partake in Sake tasting.



A variety of Sake for tasting.



Japanese tempura fried scallops and grilled yellow tail.



His Excellency Dr Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan and Senator the Honourable Dr Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs share a toast.

**Ambassador Dr. Akima Umezawa's National Day Address**

Guest of Honour, Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, The Honourable Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Ivor Archie Senator the Honourable Nigel De Freitas, President of the Senate Honourable Ministers of the Government Members of the Diplomatic Corps Honourable Members of Parliament Senior Government and Local Officials Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen.

It's my great honour to host today's Japanese national day reception, having attendance of many distinguished guests.

About two months ago, I was tremendously pleased to commence my mission to further enhance the friendly relationship with this magical state, Trinidad Tobago, which proudly promotes its beautiful nature, the world renowned magical carnival and its status as the home of steel pan music, which I love madly.

Last year, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Trinidad Tobago, which was established in 1964. Coincidentally, I was born in 1964. I feel I was magically destined to be here tonight.

Today's reception is to celebrate the 65th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor, Naruhito, the 126th Emperor of Japan. The first emperor ascended to the throne in 660 years before Christ, which means the Japanese Emperor is the world longest continuous monarchy spanning more than 2,600 years of successions.

This might be considered to be magical. But, I think the magical features of Trinidad Tobago are much more than those of Japan.

A month before, on the invitation of His Worship, the Mayor of Port of Spain, with the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, I had an opportunity to Pan yard crawls in Port of Spain. Thank you very much, Honourable Minister and Your Worship. There, I was completely astonished at the magical fascination of steel pan music.

Steel pan is categorically a percussion which plays a rhythmic backbone. Without a perfect harmony of the combination of playing sticks beating pans, it may produce loud noise. But, surprisingly and magically, they orchestrated beautiful melody, code, and rhythm, creating magnificently gorgeous music. I could feel the spirit of harmony in the heart of Trinidad and Tobago people.

Speaking of harmony, when we, Japanese, write a word "us" in a Japanese calligraphic character, "Wa", it means harmony. In Japan's first constitution established in the early 7th century, the first sentence at the first article says "the harmony is prime importance in the society".

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Magically, I feel some commonality exists between our two countries in terms of harmony.

Ladies and gentlemen, last week, we all enjoyed the globally famous TT Carnival. I was no exception, having been immersed in the magical trait of cultural, traditional and festive performances. I also learned that the carnival has symbolized freedom and resistance against the oppression.

It has evolved into a celebration, showcasing the vibrant art and culture which inspire peace.

Last year, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the Japanese grass roots organization, “Hidankyo” which comprises of atomic bomb survivors. They have promoted a world free of nuclear weapons, demonstrating through witness testimony, as peace seekers.

The Japanese global contributions to world peace is not only through such grass roots efforts but also through professional ones. For example, we know two prominent international judicial bodies that contribute to world peace and justice: the ICJ, International Court of Justice, and the ICC, International Criminal Court. Interestingly, the current presidents of both ICJ and ICC are Japanese legal scholars, Judge Iwasawa and Judge Akane, respectively.

Then historically, from Trinidad and Tobago, 4 judges have been nominated in the International Criminal Court, in addition to the founding father of the ICC, His Excellency Arthur Robinson, Former Prime Minister and later President.

This is another instance I feel commonality between us in terms of the global contributions to world peace.

Ladies and gentlemen, last December, Japan hosted the Japan - CARICOM Foreign Ministers Meeting in Tokyo, inviting ministers from all 14 countries, confirming our multi-lateral cooperation. Thank you very much, Minister Browne, for your attendance. In Tokyo, Minister Browne and Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Iwaya, also had a bilateral meeting, fostering our determination, “Partnership for Peace, Development, and Prosperity” on the occasion of the 6 decades of diplomatic relations between us. So, this year, we turn the new page of our cordial ties, aspiring to heighten our amicable relations, based on the commonality such as harmony and seeking peace.

Next month, Japan opens the curtain on the Expo 2025, bringing people and innovations together from around the world, including, of course, from Trinidad and Tobago. Its theme is “Designing Future Society for Our Lives” showcasing the Japan’s state of art technology on the concept of “People’s Living Laboratory”. Today, we exhibit one of the Japanese innovative living technologies just at the front entrance, which achieves the energy transition from conventional system to the future pioneering style in a form of hybrid cars. You can check it out before you leave the reception.



## Press Release

Ladies and Gentlemen, much similar to Trinidad and Tobago, Japan is also often considered " It's due to the blend of uniqueness, such as:

- thousands of ancient traditions, as exemplified by monarchy,
- fascinating four seasons landscapes, from white beach to white snow,
- numerous futuristic technologies, you can experience in the Expo 2025,
- strong emphasis on health, as represented by the world longest life expectancy,
- then, stunning Japanese cuisine, distinctly separated from other cultures in the world.

Tonight, we are proudly offering Japanese dishes and Japanese alcohol, sake, both of which were inscribed on the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013 and 2024, respectively. At the corner of the garden side, you can enjoy special Japanese sea foods and Japanese sake, which were imported from Japan to entertain your palate. So, Please enjoy all the magical features tonight

Thank you.