

“Journey to Explore your Talents”

2026 Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme Send-Off Reception

On July 29, 2026, the Embassy of Japan held the send-off reception and pre-departure orientation for participants of the 2026 Japan Exchange and Training (JET) Programme at the residence of His Excellency Dr. UMEZAWA Akima, Ambassador of Japan. For the 2026 JET Programme Cycle, twenty-four (24) candidates have been selected; twenty-two (22) participants from Trinidad and Tobago and two (2) from St. Lucia.

With warm words of encouragement from Ambassador UMEZAWA, the participants will depart for Japan eager to embrace their new roles as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in schools throughout Japan. They will support English language education, promote cultural exchange and foster global awareness within classrooms and broader communities while gaining valuable teaching experience, language skills, and intercultural understanding.

Please visit the Embassy of Japan website for more information on the JET Programme and the Embassy’s daily activities: https://www.tt.embjapan.go.jp/itprtop_en/index.html



At center, H.E. UMEZAWA Akima, Ambassador of Japan, to his right, Ms. Abigail Bynoe, Permanent Secretary (Ag.) in the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism, and to his left, Professor Nicole Roberts, Former Director of the CLL, UWI. From the left, Dr. Abdul Knowles, Director of the Institute of International Relations, Ms. Fayola Nicholas, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, COSTAATT and Mr. Neville Alexander, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.) in the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism, stand together with the 2026 JET participants



Ambassador UMEZAWA gives his remarks at the Reception



Ms. Miriam Lochan, President of the JET Alumni Association of Trinidad & Tobago, gives her remarks at the Reception



Mr. Nwadike Bacchus gives his remarks on behalf of the outgoing Trinidad and Tobago JETs



Ms. Chrisla Emmanuel gives her remarks on behalf of the outgoing St. Lucia JETs



Deputy Head of Mission, Mrs. Shoko Shinohara, delivers a presentation at the JET Orientation



Mrs. Sharon Dolabaille-Dowden, Public Relations, Cultural Affairs & Programmes Coordinator, speaks at the JET Orientation



Mr. Ato Mendoza points out where he has been placed in Japan



Ms. Natalie Bajnath places her tag by her new home in Japan



Ms. Crista Preville of St. Lucia points out where her new home will be in Japan



Mr. Chris Rajkumar places his tag by his new home in Japan



Past JETS share their experiences with the 2026 JET participants



Guests enjoy an array of authentic Japanese cuisine

Ambassador UMEZAWA's Remarks

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Very good evening,

It's my greatest privilege to commence today's JET Programme reception, with many guests gathering.

In this memorable year of 2026, which marks the 40th anniversary of the JET Programme, it's my deepest pleasure to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the 24 young participants, - 22 from Trinidad and Tobago, and 2 from St. Lucia, who are taking part in this remarkable journey.

Ladies and Gentlemen, JET program participation from Trinidad and Tobago began in 2004, making this year the 22nd year of involvement. By coincidence, 22 participants are joining from Trinidad and Tobago this year. It is truly moving in this commemorative 40th anniversary year. This implies that eight years from now, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Trinidad and Tobago's JET participation, so I hope that we may see 30 participants on the 30th anniversary. I also hope number of participants from St. Lucia may increase every year. For achieving this endeavour, the support of the JET Alumni Association is of crucial importance.

In many years, the association has contributed significantly to fostering mutual understanding and strengthening friendly relations between our countries through its active support for cultural events. Serving as civil diplomats, their tremendous efforts were recognised with the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation in 2022. Then, this year, 2026, marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the alumni association. A commemorative "10th anniversary reception" will be held in November this year. I hope the association will continue to be a bridge that links the hearts of our nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the theme of today's reception, "Journey to Explore your Talents," which stands for JET, reflects the very essence of the JET Programme. It's because this opportunity will allow each of you to blow your talents—truly a "Hop Step Jet" experience.

Finally, following today's programme, a Japanese food buffet prepared by a Japanese chef awaits you. I wish you all a memorable evening, "Just Enjoy the Time".