

Haiti independence day

Friendship opens door to wider cooperation

Jean-Claude Bordes
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF HAITI

Every year at this time, the Republic of Haiti celebrates its independence, which took place 205 years ago, when the world witnessed with great astonishment black men, who had been brutally imported from



Africa, breaking the chains of slavery to gain their freedom by "iron and fire." Indeed, they achieved no less than a Herculean feat by defeating Napoleon's experienced troops and by making their bruised voices heard on the world stage. Since then, the Republic of Haiti has been one of its proud members.

However, this year, the Haitian people, so mindful of their legendary past, are not in the mood for celebrating. Besides the many difficulties the country is already facing, Haiti suffered a devastating

toll from the successive passage of four hurricanes.

Almost a thousand people were killed while hundreds more are still missing. Hundreds of houses were destroyed, and the road network was severely damaged, making it difficult and sometimes even impossible to supply urgent relief to people affected by the disaster.

Thanks to the attentive assistance of the international community, the government is coping gradually with the catastrophe. And Japan, loyal and supportive friend of Haiti, came forward generously during these painful events. Indeed, Japan swiftly provided substantial assistance to Haiti, for which we are very grateful. Our gratitude extends, of course, to the noble and fascinating Japanese people, whose ancestral values and creative genius are praised on a daily basis, and cited as an example to the whole world.

On behalf of the Haitian government, and my sisters and brothers in Haiti, let me

please address my thanks to you once again.

This represents undoubtedly an opportunity for me to urge Japan's industrialists and business people to turn to this hospitable land and invest in my country. Everything is ready for them: tax incentives, guarantees and protection of investment, cost of living, a quality workforce, the strength of the yen against the gourde and so on. I am always ready to assist those requiring any further information.

Furthermore, a delegation, headed by H.E. Ambassador Guy Lamothe, in his capacity as director general of the Investment Facilitation Center (CFI), participated in the "Asia-Latin America and the Caribbean Trade and Investment Forum" organized Oct. 30 and 31, 2008, by the Inter-American Development Bank's Office in Asia in Tokyo.

The CFI has the specific mission of providing potential investors with all the necessary information that is

needed for their project. In doing so, it cuts the usual lengthy paperwork to a bare minimum, reduces inherent costs and opportunities for corruption.

By providing adequate assistance to investors, the CFI does not interfere in the project study. Furthermore, the CFI represents the Technical Division of the Interdepartmental Investment Commission (CII) and that of the National Council of Free Zones (CNZF). Such capacity allows the CFI to provide the necessary information to prospective enterprises willing to benefit from the advantages related to the zones as stipulated in the Investment Code and the Free Zones Statutes.

The CFI board members, from the public and private sectors, cater to a long-standing wish among entrepreneurs who have always pleaded for a simplified, low-cost process to set up their enterprises in the country.

On the threshold of a new year, I want to extend my re-

spectful greetings and best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the symbols of hope and unity for the Japanese people, to the Imperial family, to Prime Minister Taro Aso and the members of his Cabinet, including their families.

I join my best wishes to those of H.E. President of the Republic of Haiti Rene Preval and Prime Minister H.E. Michelle Duvivier Pierre-Louis, who wish you a Happy New Year, dear friends of Japan.



On guard: The 19th-century Citadel is the largest fortress in the Western Hemisphere and was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1982.

Congratulations
on the National Day of the Republic of Haiti



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Congratulations
on the 205th Anniversary of the
Independence Day of the Republic of Haiti

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