

# Central America independence day

## Countries unite in celebrating independence

### Growing Central American ties

Martha Zelayandia  
AMBASSADOR OF EL SALVADOR

Dear readers of The Japan Times, we are honored to address you in this special edition on the occasion of celebrating the 194th Anniversary of Independence of our Central American nations.

On Sept. 15, 1821, the five countries of Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica declared their independence from Spain. In the following decades, we were united together as one country, the Federal Republic of Central America. This unified republic could not consolidate due to both internal and external reasons.

However, awareness of the historic, cultural and geographic common links has always prevailed among our people and therefore make feel us "as one" as we work toward the union and integration of the Central American region as the best practice to share and face our also common challenges.

During the 1980s, we experienced difficult times due to military conflicts (with the exception of Costa Rica), but, in spite of this, the way we overcame these conflicts through political dialogue and peace agreements is highly admirable. Today, peace and stability prevails in our region despite other difficulties we still face.



Representing the embassies of the five republics of Central America, (from left) Charge d'affaires of Guatemala Cristobal Herrera; Ambassador of El Salvador Martha Zelayandia; Ambassador of Nicaragua Saul Arana; Ambassador of Costa Rica Laura Esquivel; and Charge d'affaires of Honduras Carlos Mendoza join hands to celebrate the 194th anniversary of Independence of the Central American countries from Spain. YOSHIKI MIURA

Central America has a privileged geographic position with access to both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, linking at the same time both North and South America making smooth trade between the continents possible. We share a rich cultural heritage, beautiful beaches, majestic volcanoes and more touristic potential, as well as human resources, capacities to generate clean energy and agricultural potential among others.

During our history of inte-

gration, several academic, economic and financial entities have been created throughout the years with the purpose to maximize the results for a bet-

ter future for our countries. In this sense it is important to mention the creation of the Central American Integration System (SICA), which original-



ly started with the five republics and is currently expanded with the integration of the republics of Panama, Belize and Dominican Republic.

This year we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan and we would like to express our gratitude to the government and people of this friendly country for the great cooperation and understanding toward our countries. Japan is an active collaborator for our integration and sustain-

able development.

We wish to continue and strengthen even more our friendship and cooperation. There is no doubt that by joining hands we can contribute to build a better world.

Ambassador Martha Zelayandia is writing on behalf of the chiefs of missions of the republics of Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

Takashi Uto  
PARLIAMENTARY VICE-MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On behalf of the government of Japan, I would like to extend my congratulations to the peoples of El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua on the occasion of their 194th anniversary of independence.

This year is a key milestone marking the 80th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the five Central American countries. Japan and the Central American Integration System (SICA) that comprises Belize, Panama and the Dominican Republic in addition to five Central American countries, designated this year as Japan-SICA Friendship Year 2015 and are organizing various commemorative events.

As parliamentary vice-minister in charge of Latin American and the Caribbean affairs, I am engaging in active diplomatic efforts moving to strengthen ties with Central American countries, thus making the friendship year

a great success. In February, I attended a ceremony to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Japan and Honduras at the invitation of the government of Honduras. In May, I participated in the Japan-Central America Business Forum, which was held in Guatemala, and I visited Nicaragua and El Salvador in July.

In Japan, a variety of commemorative events are being held such as the Central American Film Festival in Tokyo and the U-22 International Football Friendly Match between Japan and Costa Rica in Sendai.

By participating in these events, we are reconfirming the lasting friendly ties between Japan and Central America.

Last year, in a speech on Japan's foreign policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe presented a guiding principles, "progresar, liderar e inspirar juntos" (develop, lead and inspire together)." Taking advantage of the friendship year, I sincerely hope that friendly and cooperative ties between Japan and Central American nations will further bring us closer as partners to develop "juntos."

### Mayan history in Guatemala

Located in Peten in the north of Guatemala, the main tourist attraction of the Tical National Park is the ancient Mayan city of Tikal, which is surrounded by rain forest and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1979.

Tikal is one of the largest archaeological sites and urban centers of the Mayan civilization, with huge temples mostly constructed during the eighth century, and has become a



Tical National Park THE GUATEMALAN INSTITUTE OF TOURISM

world leader in pre-Columbian Mayan heritage that accounts for the majesty of one of mankind's greatest civilizations.

Tikal grew into an important ceremonial, cultural and commercial center over the centuries.

### Honduras boasts quality coffee

On 2005, Honduras obtained the first Origin Denomination of the country and of the Central American region. DO Marcala Coffee is an incentive that recognizes the work of people from 19 municipalities dedicated to coffee growing and who fiercely protect their labor and search for quality as small farmers, intermediaries, toasters, brokers and exporters.



A Honduran high-quality coffee farm EMBASSY OF HONDURAS

We invite you to taste the excellence of Honduran coffee and the delicious and distinct flavors from our country's six regions. Honduran coffee corresponds to people, tradition and accordance with the environment. The quality is a result of rich natural resources, geographic diversity and hard work.

### Scenic and beautiful Nicaragua

Ometepe Island, a paradisiacal destination, rises from Lake Nicaragua in the Republic of Nicaragua. The name Ometepe means "two hills" in the native Nahuatl language. The island is a sanctuary of indigenous tribes and is home to many petroglyphs, ceramics and statues. Current inhabitants are dedicated to fishing and quality agricultural production and, more recently, have begun hosting international tourists that come from all over the world to explore its spectacular beauty and ancient culture.



Ometepe Island and Lake Nicaragua EMBASSY OF NICARAGUA

### Costa Rica is a great place to visit



Manuel Antonio National Park EMBASSY OF COSTA RICA

Costa Rica's beauty is a point of pride, boasting tropical beaches, grand adventures, wonders of nature and a scintillating culture. Costa Rica is a natural and peaceful country where 5 percent of the world's diversity and the happiest people in the world live. The location and the people make for world-class investment opportunities. Costa Rica is an excellent location for high-tech multinational companies focused on life sciences, clean technologies and services.

We export diversity to the world. From the most exquisite fruits to exotic flowers; from delicate medical devices and advanced manufacturing to innovative animators; Costa Rica's quality exceeds expectations.

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala,  
Honduras and Nicaragua  
on the 194th Anniversary  
of Their Independence

**Takeshige Ogawa**  
Honorary Consul of  
the Republic of Guatemala in Yokohama  
and  
Group Representative

**BROOK'S**  
BROOK'S Co., Ltd.  
Importer, Roaster and Seller of Guatemalan Coffee

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YAZAKI Corporation  
[www.yazaki-group.com/](http://www.yazaki-group.com/)

Arnecom de El Salvador S.A. de C.V.  
Yazaki Nicaragua S.A.

### Majestic volcanoes in El Salvador

Located near the coast in western El Salvador, Izalco, which means "the place of obsidian" in the native Nahuatl language, is a stratovolcano on the side of the Santa Ana Volcano. From the time it was formed in 1770, Izalco erupted almost continuously until 1958, earning it the nickname "Lighthouse of the Pacific," as the light produced by the magma served as a guide for ships passing nearby. The formation of the volcano covered highly valuable land, which was used for the production of sugar cane, cacao and coffee. Some Japanese call this volcano "The Salvadoran Mount Fuji."



Izalco volcano EMBASSY OF EL SALVADOR



**Congratulations to the Peoples of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua on the 194th Anniversary of Their Independence Day**

*Yoshihiko Morita*  
Yoshihiko Morita  
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies  
Chancellor and Chair of the Board of Governors  
Honorary Consul-General of Nicaragua  
Honorary Consul of Mexico

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