

Cuba National Day Special

United through friendship, mutual respect

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AMBASSADOR OF CUBA



The Republic of Cuba celebrates its National Day on Jan. 1, in commemoration of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, 65 years ago. It is of great relevance, because since this

date Cubans have been masters of their own destiny, after almost a century of struggle against Spanish colonialism and U.S. neocolonialism to achieve national independence.

I wish to emphasize that despite the geographical distance that separates us, Cuba and Japan have remained united over time, through friendship and mutual respect. For more than nine decades, Japanese-Cuban relations have stood the test of time, in the midst of rapidly changing international conditions.

In the year just concluded, we commemorated the 125th anniversary of the Japanese migration to Cuba, with the celebration of multiple activities in both countries. Among the milestones of 2023, the fluid exchange of delegations from various sectors stands out. In this regard, the visits to Cuba of high-level representatives of the Liberal Democratic Party and the celebration of the XVI Meeting of Political Consultations between our Ministries of Foreign Affairs were notable examples.

In the economic and commercial sphere, the participation of the president of the Japan-Cuba Economic Conference in the 39th edition of the Havana International Fair, a space that allowed for verification of business opportunities in Cuba



Havana boasts a vibrant dance and music scene. ALEJANDRO AZCUY

and the progress of foreign investments in the Mariel Special Development Zone was another highlight of 2023.

The cooperation provided by the government of Japan to Cuba through the Japan International Cooperation Agency in sectors such as health, renewable energy, transportation and water resources, have contributed to improving the standard of living of the Cuban population.

In particular, Japanese organizations and individuals made material and financial donations to help Cuba recover from natural disasters and major accidents

between 2022 and 2023.

During 2023, the number of Japanese visitors to Cuba also increased, attracted by its natural landscapes, indigenous culture, historical heritage and hospitality.

Sports relations between our countries continued to strengthen as well. The Cuban baseball team that participated in the fifth World Baseball Classic used training bases in the prefectures of Okinawa and Miyazaki, and played exhibition games with clubs from Nippon Professional Baseball. The latter games, held prior to the WBC, were attended by large crowds



Cuban cigars are regarded as some of the best in the world. ALEJANDRO AZCUY

that reflected our mutual admiration for baseball. Similarly, Cubans and Japanese attended Tokyo Dome during the second round of the WBC to enjoy Cuba's game against Australia.

Cultural ties were highlighted by the third tour to Japan of Los Van Van, a major Cuban group that performed concerts in the cities of Fukuoka, Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo. Japanese audiences, lovers of traditional Cuban music, were able to enjoy and dance to the rhythm of one of the most renowned Cuban orchestras, with more than 50 years of history and several Grammy Awards.

2023 was a very active year for Cuba in foreign affairs. Among the main results were the pro tempore presidency of the Group of 77+China, which represents most of the countries in the world and nearly 80% of its population, and which held its summit in Havana in September.



Pinar del Rio is one of Cuba's three main coffee-growing regions. MINISTRY OF TOURISM OF CUBA

This responsibility allowed Cuba to participate as president pro tempore of the G77+China during important negotiating processes of relevance for underdeveloped countries.

The United Nations General Assembly demanded for the 31st time the end of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba. Once again, Japan voted in favor of lifting that unjust policy, together with the overwhelming majority of the international community.

Despite the tightening of U.S. economic sanctions and attempts at regime change, Cuba will continue to move forward in building a socialist, democratic, just and sustainable society. At the same time, we will continue to defend multilateralism,

peace and sustainable development.

In 2024, Cuba and Japan will celebrate the 95th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. We are fully confident that this year will continue to strengthen the historic friendly relations between our peoples and governments.

On the occasion of Cuba's National Day and the beginning of the year 2024, I am honored to convey on behalf of the Cuban people and government our best wishes of health, peace and prosperity to the government and people of Japan, as the first female Cuban ambassador appointed to Japan.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

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*on the National Day of
the Republic of Cuba*

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on the National Day

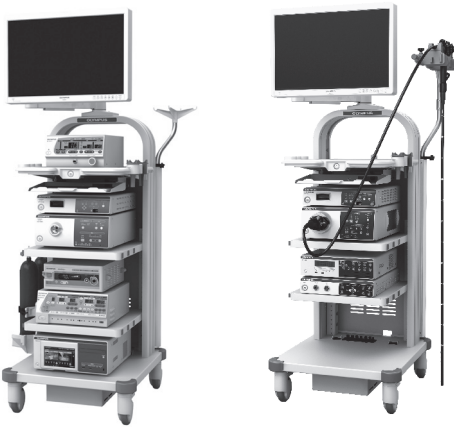
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