

# Panama independence day

Jorge Kosmas Sifaki  
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF PANAMA

## Transforming Panama into Latin America's best business platform

On behalf of the government of the Republic of Panama, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all Panamanian citizens in Japan on the occasion of the 106th anniversary of our independence. I would also like to greet Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as the noble Japanese people.



From July 1 this year, a new government led by H. E. Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal has assumed the direction of our country. President Martinelli's style of management is down-to-earth, always working shoulder to shoulder with

the people in the field.

One of his first actions was fulfilling his campaign pledge to provide a monthly allowance of \$100 to elderly people who do not have pensions.

On the transportation front, President Martinelli established the Secretariat for the Metro, to coordinate the modernization of the transportation system of Panama. The new government plans to introduce a system to mobilize masses in a more comfortable and safe way, and to reduce traffic congestion on the main avenues of Panama City. The new system is expected to be completed before the end of the current administration.

As for public safety, the Martinelli administration managed to increase the sala-



**President Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal**

ries of officers of the National Police Service, the Air-Naval Service, the Border Police Service and the Institutional

Protection Service.

In the area of health care, the new government has approved the construction of more than 30 health centers, and has authorized free medical attention and dental care in all health centers managed by the Ministry of Health. In addition, it is reorganizing the procedures to book medical appointments in all health institutions, for the comfort of and benefit of the patients who need to receive medical attention at hospitals.

Similarly, in education, several changes are being implemented by the Martinelli administration. For example, the Ministry of Education has begun the purchase of school materials and books, to be delivered free of charge for students at elementary school level in public schools. This scheme supports the "Let's get back to the classroom" program, which has started a system-wide restructuring process of study plans, so that our citizens will be ready to face the challenges of the 21st century. Moreover, the government launched an initiative to provide Internet access in all official schools in Panama, starting with schools located in the provincial capitals.

Many citizens have also improved their quality of life thanks to the efforts of the new government to promote the sale of food at accessible prices through the reduction of the tariffs on imported basic staples and through the reduction of the cost of energy. In addition, the government is engaged in the promotion of employment through the

training of young people who receive an income while getting ready for the marketplace.

It is important to point out that all of these measures have been carried out in the first 100 days of the Martinelli administration thanks to a new style of management, based on hard work and re-

sults orientation, similar to that seen in the business world. In this regard, the president is firmly committed to transforming government bureaucracy so that it can function with efficiency levels similar to those in entrepreneurial companies.

The president is also committed to transforming Pana-

ma into the best business platform in Latin America, showing a new model of government that generates wealth, and provides opportunities for people to grow and have a respectable life. It is time for hard work and concrete actions, so that the government truly serves the interests of the public.

On the external front, under the current administration, all

embassies and consulates of Panama throughout the world have been instructed to actively promote our products in international markets, as well as foreign investment and tourism in order to deepen our relations with foreign nations.

I would like to reaffirm the will of the Martinelli administration to continue working together with the Japanese government to advance the common values of democracy, market economy and social development to further improve the well-being of our countries.



**Key waterway:** An estimated 14,000 ships pass through the Panama Canal each year.



**National dress:** The flowing skirt, abundance of handwork and ornate jewelry make La Pollera one of the most beautiful costumes in the world. EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

**Congratulations**  
on the 106th Anniversary of  
the Independence of  
the Republic of Panama

 **Mitsubishi Corporation**