

## Venezuela | national day

# Celebrating liberty, strong friendship with Japan

Seiko Ishikawa  
AMBASSADOR OF VENEZUELA



On the occasion of the 204th Anniversary of the Independence of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of our government and people, I am honored to convey our renewed commitment to the continued friendship between Venezuela and Japan, as well as to extend my best wishes of happiness, health and prosperity to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and to the Japanese government and its people. On this auspicious day, I would like to express our appreciation to The Japan Times for this opportunity to address its distinguished readers.

This year, we celebrate the bicentennial of the glorious "The Letter from Jamaica" written by Simon Bolivar, The Liberator of America, in September 1815 in Kingston, Jamaica. Considered one of the great founding documents of Latin American history, Bolivar elaborated in it his ideals and vision not only for the young Republic of Venezuela but also for all of Latin America. Bolivar wrote, "More than anyone, I desire to see America (Latin America) fashioned into the greatest nation in

the world, greatest not so much by virtue of her area and wealth as by her freedom and glory."

The fundamental thinking of this historic document is still very much alive today. As a nation that inherited the virtues that Bolivar cherished, embraced and pursued in an age of turbulence, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela continues to not only uphold, but also exemplify the precious asset of Simon Bolivar. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is the manifestation of Bolivar's thoughts and aspirations to unify the Latin American region.

The beginning of the movie "El Libertador" directed by Alberto Arvelo opens with the lines: "Simon Bolivar fought over 100 battles against the Spanish Empire in South America. He rode over 70,000 miles on horseback. His military campaigns covered twice the territory of Alexander the Great. His army never conquered; it liberated."

On this celebration day, I would like to extend our appreciation to the valuable friends of Venezuela who have contributed with their messages to this special supplement of our National celebration.

For more information about the film, "El Libertador," kindly refer to "El Libertador' Star on Why Every American Should Know Simon Bolivar's Story" by Carolina Moreno, *The Huffington Post*, 10/03/2014. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/03/el-libertador-simon-bolivar\\_n\\_5927916.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/03/el-libertador-simon-bolivar_n_5927916.html)



## Collaborating across many fields



Masateru Ito  
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-VENEZUELA ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the Japan-Venezuela Association, I extend my sincere congratulations to the government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the occasion of the 204th anniversary of the country's independence.

Japan and Venezuela maintain a traditionally friendly relationship and the cultural exchanges between both countries have been increasingly active. In recent years the Cultural Week of Japan in Venezuela has been held annually in the cities of Caracas, Merida and Valencia. It has a variety of events such as karate, judo and kendo demonstrations, ikebana, bonsai, ceramics, origami and calendars workshops and exhibitions, Japanese Movies Festival and speech contest in Japanese language among other events.

Japan and Venezuela are deepening their

bilateral cooperation not only in the cultural and artistic areas but also in intellectual exchanges and other fields. Every year five or six Venezuelan students are invited to study and conduct research in Japanese universities. Similarly, Japanese citizens participate in cooperation activities in Venezuela in various areas, including agriculture, forestry, the environment, health, education, sports as well as planning and administration under Japan International Cooperation Agency's volunteer programs. Through mutual efforts the two nations have expanded the scope of mutual understanding and have developed much closer relations with each other.

The Japan-Venezuela Association has been making efforts over the last 12 years to promote goodwill and friendship between the citizens of our two nations. I would like to reiterate our warmest felicitations on this historic day, and to assure all our Venezuelan friends that the Japan-Venezuela Association will continue to contribute to the strengthening of our bilateral relationship.

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela  
on the Occasion of the 204th Anniversary  
of Their Independence

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## Building stronger bonds through music, youth exchange programs



**Yutaka Kikugawa**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
FRIENDS OF EL SISTEMA  
JAPAN (FESJ)

On behalf of Friends of El Sistema Japan (FESJ), I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the occasion of the 204th anniversary of their country's independence.

Since the memorandum of understanding between the Simon Bolivar Music Foundation (SBMF), responsible for El Sistema; the world famous Venezuelan music education program and FESJ was signed on July 24, 2012, various cross-cultural exchanges between our two countries have been undertaken.

During the summer of 2013, a group of Venezuelan musicians, including Maestro Joshua Dos Santos, kindly supported FESJ in organizing the first summer seminar for the Soma Children's Orchestra

(SCO). In November 2013, along with SBMF senior management members, the Libertadores String Quartet gave a special concert in Soma, Fukushima Prefecture.

Additionally, in March 2014, FESJ music directors, including myself, had a chance to visit different El Sistema project sites in Venezuela. Maestro Gustavo Dudamel, the global icon of El Sistema, generously participated in the FESJ annual charity gala reception last September. To top it off, he held a special event called "Dudamel and His Children," at which he conducted the

SCO and its choir, featuring members of the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles at Sun-tory Hall in March. It should be noted that both exceptional events were graced with the presence of Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado.

Finally, I wish the Venezuelan people peace and prosperity as they celebrate their independence. The FESJ will continue to do its best to fulfill children's rights to quality music and education in life skills; firstly in the disaster-affected Tohoku region, and potentially across all of Japan.

## Decades of productive, amiable relations



**Takeo Hiranuma**  
CHAIRMAN OF THE  
JAPAN-VENEZUELA  
PARLIAMENTARY  
FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

On behalf of the Japan-Venezuela Parliamentary Friendship League, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and its people on the celebration of the 204th anniversary of their independence.

Japan and Venezuela have nurtured their mutual relationship through 77 years of productive and friendly ties, based on common fundamental values toward peace and prosperity.

Our countries are working tirelessly for greater international understanding and

cooperation among nations. Currently Venezuela holds a nonpermanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, promoting shared goals toward reform, nuclear disarmament and the promotion of human rights. Also, this year, Venezuela will exercise its great leadership hosting the 17th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, taking over as chair from 2015 to 2018.

In December, Venezuelans will go to the polls to elect members of the next National Assembly. I am convinced this process will reflect, once again, the strength of its institutions and the democratic values of its citizens.

As chairman of the Japan-Venezuela Parliamentary Friendship League, I am determined to deepen and expand further the close and friendly relations between Japan and Venezuela.

## Ensuring well being while moving toward civil equality



**Toshihiro Nikai**  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JAPAN-  
VENEZUELA FRIENDSHIP  
COUNCIL

As chairman of the Japan-Venezuela Friendship Council, I am honored to convey my warmest congratulations to the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, H.E. Nicolas Maduro, his government and the friendly people of Venezuela on the occasion of the 204th anniversary of their country's independence.

We praise the great efforts undertaken by the Bolivarian government under the able leadership of Maduro to continue the legacy of the late President Hugo Chavez to build a fairer society, based on fundamental civil rights such as freedom of speech and expression and the wellbeing of all Venezuelan people.

I would like to express my great satisfaction for the positive development of the bilateral ties between Japan and Venezuela as a reflection of our longstanding friendship. Venezuela continues to play a vital role in the energy security of Japan. Furthermore, we would like to increase our efforts in supporting the development of Venezuela, through our technological capacity and financial resources.

On this day, celebrating Venezuelan independence, I would like to convey the joy of being a significant part of the development of our friendly ties and, as chairman of the Japan-Venezuela Friendship Council, I vow to continue promoting our bilateral cooperation and mutual trust for the benefit of our countries and peoples.

## Important energy, resource partners



**Yorihiro Kojima**  
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-  
VENEZUELA  
ECONOMIC COMMITTEE,  
KEIDANREN

On behalf of the Japan-Venezuela Economic Committee of Keidanren, I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations to H.E. President Nicolas Maduro and the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the 204th anniversary of their independence.

Venezuela and Japan have been building good relations in various areas especially in the natural resource and energy sectors, while Japanese companies have participated in oil extraction projects in the Orinoco Belt and extended loans to Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA). Venezuela is an indispensable partner for Japan from the viewpoint of energy security. Venezuela has a wealth of natural resources such as crude oil reserves, which are some of the largest in the world, as well as natural gas and iron ore. Built around these fields, I believe that our bilateral cooperative relations will further develop.

Besides its energy and natural resource sectors, Venezuela — with its population of 30 million — is expected to potentially be a huge consumer market. Additionally, I have great expectations of further improvement in the business environment of Venezuela and the expansion of business activities by Japanese companies in the country, enhancing further development of the economic relations between the two nations.

Finally, I sincerely wish the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and its people peace and prosperity on its anniversary of independence. The Japan-Venezuela Economic Committee will continue to do its best to enhance the economic relations between the two nations and help contribute to a mutually beneficial future.

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