

Ecuador national day

A bright future for society, economy

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AMBASSADOR OF ECUADOR

On Aug. 10, Ecuador commemorates 206 years since its Proclamation of Independence. Thanks to the kind invitation of The Japan Times, as Ambassador of Ecuador, it is a great honor to express my greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko; to H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe; to H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida; to the noble Japanese people; and to my fellow compatriots who live in Japan. It is also an honor to



share some of the most important achievements of my country, made by the Government of the Citizen's Revolution, within the framework of the 2008 Montecristi Constitution, and the Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir (National Plan for Good Living), instruments that enshrine rights and warrants, encourage the participation of all ethnic and multicultural groups that constitute the Ecuadorean nation, and work to build a democratic, inclusive, just, equitable and fair society.

In his May 24 annual address to the nation, President Rafael Correa said that, despite the economic difficulties that the international community is experiencing, thanks to the planning and good economic

management performed by the country, it was possible to continue with the construction of major infrastructure projects, which include hydroelectric dams and a national network of highways, roads and paths to name some, as well as maintain scholarship programs in the world's best universities, benefiting over 10,000 young Ecuadoreans.

Despite a drop in oil prices, Ecuador grew by 3.8 percent in 2014. The nonoil GDP grew 4.3 percent, or nearly four times the Latin American average of 1.1 percent. Tax revenues were more than 50 percent of the general budget; and value added tax showed growth of 15 percent. In April, the private financial sector increased by 5.13

percent, annual inflation was 4.32 percent; poverty fell by 12.5 points, and the unemployment rate fell to 3.8 percent.

Ecuador is proud to host the permanent headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Union de Naciones Suramericanas (Union of South American Nations). The organization established the Bank of the South, which will be the cornerstone for the new regional financial architecture that will support these nations' development programs. Established in 2010, the Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribenos (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), constitutes an important mechanism of regional dialogue, cooperation and integration, of which Ecua-

dor has held the Pro Tempore Presidency since January. Ecuador has also strengthened relations with Asian and African countries, with whom it has signed 168 agreements on political issues covering a wide range of areas.

With regards to bilateral relations with Japan, a growing number of Ecuadorean companies have been participating in the food and flower expositions at Makuhari Messe in Chiba Prefecture. Several business missions and the executive chairman of the Ecuadorean Chamber of Industries and Production visited Japan to conduct meetings with the Japanese private sector. Additionally, representatives of several prestigious Japanese companies have participated in the Macro Business Round held every year in Guayaquil, under the sponsorship of the Instituto de Promoción de

Exportaciones e Inversiones (Ecuadorean Institute to Promote Exports and Investment), which has generated a significant increase in trade of products such as oil, flowers, bananas, coffee, cacao, abaca, fruits juice and fruits preserves, tuna, fishmeal, shrimp and other items.

To achieve better understanding between our countries' peoples, the Embassy has organized many events across Japan. In the framework of citizen's diplomacy, the Embassy sponsored a visit to Niigata Prefecture last year, of a baseball delegation of 16 Ecuadorean players. Recently 154 Ecuadorean Boy Scouts participated in the 2015 World Jamboree in Yamaguchi Prefecture in July and August.

Finally, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs from both countries have agreed to develop a special program to commemorate, in 2018, the first Centenary of

the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Ecuador and Japan.

High priority will be given to the proposal to establish the "Cátedra Dr. Hideyo Noguchi" to pay tribute to the fruitful work of such Japanese scholar, who in 1918 performed part of his scientific research in Ecuador for the eradication of yellow fever.

Dr. Hideyo Noguchi's efforts and positive results earned him honorary doctorates from Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca universities and recognition from the Ecuadorean Government.

On this significant date, I dedicate myself to strengthen and stretch even further the friendly relations and cooperation that exist between both our nations.

**Congratulations
to the People of Ecuador
on the 206th Anniversary of Their Independence**

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