

# Venezuela National Day Special

## Productive, bilateral relationship continues

**SEIKO ISHIKAWA**  
AMBASSADOR OF VENEZUELA



On this auspicious occasion of the celebration of the Independence of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I would like to extend warm greetings and congratulations to the Venezuelan

community in Japan. I would also like to extend my best wishes of happiness, health and prosperity to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, to the government of Japan and its people and convey our renewed commitment for the continued friendship between Venezuela and Japan.

Despite the difficult economic situation Venezuelans are facing as a result of the illegal Unilateral Coercive Measures (so named by a U.N. resolution), or sanctions, that have been imposed by the United States government, Venezuela has managed to keep the

advance of the COVID-19 pandemic at bay among its population. This is thanks to the rapid and forceful prevention and care measures adopted by its government and followed by its people, with the valuable technical support of countries such as Cuba, China and Russia, as well as coordination with the World Health Organization and other U.N. organizations.

At a very early stage, our government launched an online COVID-19 screening survey, where families reported the appearance of symptoms related to the disease, to facilitate follow-up by the authorities. As of March 31, more than 15 million people had filled out the survey, allowing the implementation of a house-to-house campaign, based on the survey results, to follow-up on prioritized cases of people with symptoms and apply free diagnosis tests. As the epicenter of the pandemic is moving to South America, Venezuela remains among the countries with the lowest infection rate and deaths in Latin America. The Bolivarian government has conducted more COVID-19 tests per million inhabitants than any other country in the region (41,339 tests per million inhabitants

as of June 28).

Aware of the negative socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, our government expanded the social programs and economic measures that have been iconic of the Bolivarian revolution. Among them are security of job tenure until Dec. 31; a special six-month payroll payment pledge for small and medium-sized businesses; and suspension of rent payments for six months. Other measures include special bonuses for workers in the informal economy and in private enterprise; and the expansion of the prioritized agro-food investment plan to guarantee food for 7 million low income families.

Amid a public health crisis — compounded by an economic crisis caused by the sanctions — Venezuela's response has been to guarantee food, provide free health care and widespread COVID-19 testing, and alleviate further economic pressure on the working class. This explains why more than 70,000 Venezuelans have returned from neighboring countries that are the epicenter of the pandemic in the region.

Under the current extraordinary circumstances, when the entire international

community is grappling with the multiple and devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is increasing consensus among multilateral forums on the devastating consequences of the sanctions on our population at large. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in his statement on March 23, called on all member states for an immediate global cease-fire to focus together on the fight against the pandemic. In the recent U.N. Comprehensive Response on COVID-19, Guterres rightly highlighted the need for world leaders to "waive sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to food, essential health supplies, and health and humanitarian workers." This echoes the calls of U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Dr. Michelle Bachelet and WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom for an end to the sanctions regime. The declaration adopted by the United Against COVID-19 Pandemic Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement on May 4 condemns the application of sanctions and urges their lifting to ensure the effectiveness of national responses to the pandemic.

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the



**The monument of the Battle of Carabobo in Carabobo, Venezuela, commemorates the victory of Venezuelan patriots, which led to the recognition of the country's independence from Spain. The country will celebrate the battle's bicentennial anniversary on June 24, 2021.**

EMBASSY OF VENEZUELA

creation of the United Nations, we need to defend and uphold more than ever the spirit and rules set by the U.N. charter and ensure that every single member state abides by it, to the benefit of humanity. Amid the current crisis, where inequalities and weaknesses of the current system have been exposed and amplified, Venezuela advocates for greater

multilateral cooperation and international solidarity among nations and peoples, not unilateralism and confrontation.

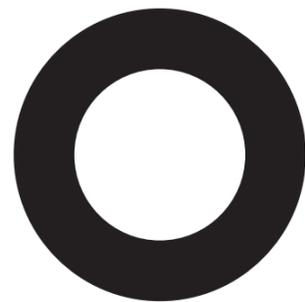
*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*

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

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