
Bolivia Independence Day Special

Friendship deepens across many spheres

**NATALIA FERNANDA
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On Bolivia's 199th independence anniversary, I extend my heartfelt greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, the government and people of Japan, and especially

to Bolivian residents of Japan.

As we approach Bolivia's bicentennial, we are moving forward with determination. The defense of democracy after the failed coup on June 26, economic consolidation, education, industrialization for import substitution and food sovereignty, along with the fight against corruption and violence, remain priorities for the government led by President Luis Arce Catacora

and Vice President David Choquehuanca. The Democratic and Cultural Revolution is progressing, building an industrialized Bolivia with strengthened economic sectors that, true to its roots, generates wealth, redistributes it and prioritizes the most vulnerable, closing gaps of inequality and promoting the full exercise of our rights.

This year, in addition to highlighting our national efforts, we celebrate 110 years of official diplomatic relations with Japan since April 13, 1914, and 125 years since the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to Bolivia. These milestones reflect a history of friendship, cooperation and mutual respect.

The Japanese have been vital to Bolivia's development since their arrival in 1899, notably contributing to agriculture. The San Juan and Okinawa colonies exemplify this integration and their significant impact. The Japanese presence has been central to our cultural rapprochement, fostering a shared vision to strengthen ties and preserve mother Earth, alongside the concept of "Vivir Bien"

(Living Well), fundamental to both cultures.

In these celebrations, we highlight our *kizuna* (bonds of friendship), reflecting a broad relationship in the political, economic, cultural and cooperative spheres, built on respect, understanding, complementarity and reciprocity. This friendship has been deepened through high-level meetings, including the political consultation mechanism in 2023 and the meeting between Foreign Ministers Celinda Sosa and Yoko Kamikawa in Brazil earlier this year.

As we commemorate these milestones and 199 years of independence, we recognize the maturity and strength of our relations with Japan. Let us continue to deepen our ties, integrate our peoples, promote mutual respect and collaborate toward a future of shared peace and prosperity.

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