# A time for reflection, rebuilding and hope

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November is a month of national pride for Panamanians, a time when we honor the defining moments of our history and reflect on what it means to be Panamanian. As our country faces extraordinary challenges, we are reminded that our greatest strength is found in the courage of our people and their willingness to stand together.

Our thoughts are especially with the families and communities affected by the devastating 7.7-magnitude earthquake that struck Panama on Oct. 9 and the aftershocks. The extensive damage to homes, schools, hospitals and sites of historical significance has brought immense hardship to our people. The road to recovery will not be easy, but our determination to rebuild remains unwavering.

Amid the devastation, we have witnessed neighbors helping neighbors, communities joining efforts and countless acts of generosity toward those who have lost so much. These expressions of solidarity reflect the spirit of the Panamanian people and give us confidence in the future.

We are deeply grateful for the sympathy and solidarity extended by the government and people of Japan. Their compassion has brought comfort and encouragement during these difficult times. Japan's own experience with natural disasters and reconstruction gives meaning to these gestures of friendship and understanding.

Our relationship with Japan extends beyond economic cooperation and shared projects. It is strengthened by the personal connections, mutual respect and trust that bring our societies closer. We look forward to further cooperation, including opportunities to draw upon Japan's expertise in disaster preparedness and resilient infrastructure.

Panama has always welcomed the world with open arms. This spirit is embodied in our country brand, "Panama, Host to the World," reflecting our hospitality, cultural diversity and openness to new opportunities. Even as we focus on recovery, our commitment to welcoming visitors, fostering partnerships and contributing to the international community remains unchanged.

As we commemorate our National Month, we honor those affected by the earthquake and reaffirm our commitment to a stronger, more resilient Panama.

Viva Panama!

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