

# Venezuela independence day

## Social investment shows progress

Seiko Ishikawa  
AMBASSADOR OF VENEZUELA



beginning of the emancipation process for the Venezuelan independence revolution. On that day, during an extraordinary meeting of the Caracas town council, Vicente Emparan, the captain general, appointed by King Fernando VII of Spain as the highest Spanish authority in the province, was dismissed and a provisional government was established. Later, on July 5, 1811, this provisional junta was ratified by all the provinces that then composed the Captaincy General of Venezuela, giving birth to our republic.

Thus, 200 years ago a generation of founders consolidated a national entity, built institutions and sought recognition from the rest of the world. That foundational intention and those ideals still inspire us today and serve as the basis to work for our country and to contribute to its progress and welfare.

Today, we can witness the

April 19, 1810, marks the



President Hugo Chavez

consolidation of achievements as a result of continuous social investment made by the government of President Hugo Chavez:

- A May 2010 government report assessing Venezuela's progress toward meeting its U.N. Millennium Develop-

ment Goals found that on most indicators Venezuela had reached its goals more than five years ahead of the 2015 deadline set by the international community.

- Both the levels of extreme poverty and poverty have fallen dramatically in Venezuela over the last decade.

- In 1996, extreme poverty stood at 42.5 percent. Since the inauguration of the government of President Chavez, it has consistently fallen, reaching 7.2 percent in 2009. A similar trend can be seen with the level of poverty, which dropped from 32.3 percent in 2002 to 21.3 percent in 2009.

- At the same time, inequality in Venezuela has diminished. In 2009, the country's Gini coefficient — a measure of inequality where being closer to zero implies more economic equality — reached 0.39, the lowest level in Latin America and the lowest during President Chavez's tenure.

- Other indicators also show the advances made in Venezuela. Unemployment at the end of 2009 stood at 7.5 percent, down from 16.8 percent in 2003.

The level of undernutrition in Venezuela fell from 11 percent in 1990 to 6 percent in 2007, while the number of children starting and finishing primary school was 5.6 percent higher from 2000–2009 than it was for the previous decade. Similarly, nationwide literacy rates rose almost continuously from 1999–2009, currently standing at 98.95 percent for men and 98.34 percent for women.

- Other advances have been made in the realm of gender equality. From 1994 to 2009, the index of parity in higher education increased from .99 to 1.46, indicating a higher proportion of women attending institutions of higher



Natural wonder: Canaima National Park is well-known for its flat-topped mountain formations known as "tepui," which comes from a local indigenous language. EMBASSY OF VENEZUELA

learning. Additionally, the percentage of women employed in nonfarm jobs has increased from 34.81 percent in 1990 to 41.96 percent in 2009. Women are also playing more significant roles in government, representing 18 percent of the country's legislature, 31 percent of its judges and leading four of the five branches of government.

- The social advances we see in Venezuela are the product of innovative social programs and continuous and increasing social investment. What started as a small number of programs in 2003 has grown to 26 today covering a large range of social needs, including health, education, housing, job training, food security, employment, legal identity, gender equality and land use.

- With these programs, government investment in social development has increased dramatically. While spending on social programs amounted to 11.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1998, it reached 21.9 percent in 2006 and settled at 19.5 percent in 2008. The accumulated government investment in social issues from 1999 to 2009 stands at \$330 billion, five times the investment made in the previous decade and the equivalent of more than 60 percent of all national revenues in those years.

- The 2010 UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report found that literacy rates in Venezuela rose from 90 percent of the population in the period 1985–1994 to over 95 percent in the period 2000–2007. The report also notes that the percentage of Venezuelan people with access to pre-primary education rose from 45 percent in 1999 to 62 percent in 2007 and that the percentage of students finishing their primary education jumped from 88 percent in 1999 to 97 percent in 2006. More broadly, the report finds that Venezuela made "significant reductions" in its out-of-school population from 1999 to 2007.

- According to the 2010 World Bank Human Opportunity Report for Latin America and the Caribbean, Venezuela ranks among the best countries in the region in terms of the availability and equitable distribution of key social services like education and housing.

Venezuela's advances in social development have been recognized by various international organizations and agencies:

agreements with the National Oil Company PDVSA to start the development of oil at the Carabobo Project in the Orinoco Belt, considered the biggest oil reserve in the world. These contracts will require investments of up to \$30 billion and will provide much needed energy security to Japan. The U.S. Geological Survey said last January that there is an estimated 513 billion barrels of recoverable heavy oil in Venezuela's Orinoco Belt, the largest accumulation ever assessed by the USGS.

In the following weeks, Mitsubishi Corp. and Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Co. will be inaugurating METOR II, the expansion project of the successful METOR plant in the east of Venezuela, with investment exceeding \$500 million, doubling its production capacity of methanol to 1.5 million tons and further adding value to our primary products.

We are expecting to further expand our economic and friendly exchange in areas of investment, trade, cooperation and other sectors such as electricity, environment, petrochemistry, communications technology and financing, in an ever-growing dynamic relationship.

Despite the geographical distance that separates us, there are common interests and links that unite our people.

Japan's national soccer team, Samurai Blue, performed well above expectations during this World Cup and garnered the respect of fans and admirers from every part of the globe, including those in our country. Yet, Japan resembles Venezuela in the same passion we have for baseball. In the 2010 season, a record 58 Venezuelans joined the rosters of MLB teams, second only to the Dominican Republic in terms of foreign-born players in U.S. professional baseball. In Japan, along the

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## Venezuela's hard-fought road to independence

On April 19, we celebrated the bicentennial of the Proclamation of Independence of Venezuela. This celebration commemorates a whole cycle of lengthy struggles and events that resulted in a new republic: independent, sovereign and prosperous, guided by ideals of equality, justice and social order.

This process started in Caracas on April 19, 1810, when a group of "criollo" citizens organized a meeting at the Town Hall to remove the acting captain general, Vicente Emparan, and then they proclaimed the independence of Venezuela and established an autonomous governing junta, due to the fact that Spanish King

Ferdinand VII had been deposed and imprisoned by Napoleon.

Additionally, the Venezuelan junta proceeded to encourage other South American municipalities to join the independence movement initiated in Caracas. Eight months later, the presence of Francisco de Miranda and Simon Bolivar sealing, in this way, the independence of Venezuela on June 24, 1821.

After the victory at Carabobo, Simon Bolivar initiated the "Campana del Sur" (The Campaign to the South). The battles of Bombona, Pichincha, Junin and Ayacucho resounded enthusiastically in the independent-minded fervor of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and the newly created Bolivia.

Declaration of Independence.

This event marked the founding of the Republic of Venezuela that was effectively consolidated, after a long 13 years of struggles and war, at the Battle of Carabobo, commanded by Simon Bolivar, sealing, in this way, the independence of Venezuela on June 24, 1821.

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Thus, the Patriotic Society declared the independence of Venezuela on July 5, 1811, and went on to sign the formal

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the Bolivarian Republic of  
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# Venezuela independence day

## 'Paradise on Earth' exudes natural beauty

### A jewel to the world

A land of variety and contrasts stirring the senses: like a smile from the South American continent to the Caribbean Sea; like a hug between the great Orinoco River and the Atlantic Ocean; like the ardent desire of the imposing Andean mountains to touch the tranquil sea. This is Venezuela.

### We are beauty

Making way into the presentation of unique and exuberant beauties of the South American continent, Venezuela shows itself as a tropical paradise with endless virtues that dazzle nature lovers. This "Land of Divine Grace," with its plains, jungles, rivers, islands, mountains, beaches and deserts, is brimming with life — a life which overflows with the warm sun

and the cool rains, always singing, flying and running. This land, whose great man, Simon Bolivar, was the star of the continental liberation, is still the residence of ancestral spirits living in rivers and waterfalls. Here Europe, Africa and America are bound together in a cross-breeding that moves along broad avenues and rural pathways, in a colorful canvas illuminated by the flora and fauna that announces an eternal springtime. With a privileged geographical location that fascinates from all angles, Venezuela is the masterpiece of the natural world gallery.

Venezuela, described as the "Paradise on Earth" by discoverer Christopher Columbus, is an amazing country. We wish to welcome all to this unique jewel generously open to enrich your senses!

### Government improves society

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years, several Venezuelan players have enjoyed the support and passion of Japanese baseball fans, among them Roberto Petagine, Alex Cabrera and Alex Ramirez. All of them have been awarded the title of Most Valuable Player in Japanese professional baseball: in 2001 (Central League), in 2002 (Pacific League) and in 2004 (Central League), respectively.

This year, Venezuela proudly hosted the International Softball Federation's XII Women's World Championship from June 23 to July 2, in Caracas. Japan's national team, gold medalist in the Beijing Olympics in 2008, is one of the 16 national teams

that are honoring us with their presence and participation.

During President Chavez's summit with then Prime Minister Taro Aso in April 2009, media coverage of the meeting largely boasted about the praise given to the Japan national team at the World Baseball Classic, which was won by Japan. This year, Samurai Blue endured some of the world's best football teams, providing pride and joy to Japanese fans. In preparation for the World Cup, Samurai Blue played a friendly match with Venezuela in Oita Stadium to a scoreless draw. It is my hope and dream to see Venezuela play again with Japan in the World Cup in Brazil in 2014!

## Sharing key values for peace and prosperity

Takeo Hiranuma  
JAPAN-VENEZUELA PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

On behalf of the Japan-Venezuela Parliamentary Friendship League, I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and its people on the occasion of the 199th anniversary of their independence.



long-standing, friendly ties. In these last few years, we have multiplied our interchange at the highest level of government and business: the Japanese participation in oil exploration in the Orinoco belt; the Venezuelan adoption of the Japanese digital TV standard ISDB-T; the development of projects in the areas of environment, energy, gas and petrochemicals are a vivid example of a relationship in constant evolution.

On this special day of celebration for the peoples of Venezuela, I would like to reflect that we share fundamental values that provide clear paths toward peace and prosperity.

Japan and Venezuela are decidedly in favor of international understanding,

peace and cooperation. In this context we are working alongside promoting integral human rights, social issues, nuclear disarmament, environmental protection for future generations and the necessary reforms of the U.N. Security Council. Furthermore, we admire the great zeal with which the Venezuelan government and its people are striving to build a fairer society. The Japan-Venezuela Parliamentary Friendship League is determined to deepen the close relationship between both nations, promoting an open political and economic dialogue. I am convinced that there are multiple and substantial opportunities that we shall explore, transit and make effective.

## Energy cooperation makes remarkable advances

Yorihiko Kojima  
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-VENEZUELA ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, NIPPON KEIDANREN

On behalf of the Japan-Venezuela Economic Committee of Nippon Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations to H.E. President Hugo Chavez and the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on their 199th anniversary of independence.



is expected to be developed further. Japan has also been contributing to a better life for the people of Venezuela by exporting industrial products, including automobiles.

Recently we have seen a remarkable advance in energy cooperation. In March 2009, Japan and Venezuela signed the memorandum on energy cooperation. Subsequently that April, the two governments agreed to set up a working group to study the possibility of the development of the heavy oil in the Orinoco Belt and natural gas. These efforts resulted in the contract awarded to the consortium that includes Japanese companies to start developing heavy oil in the Orinoco Belt in the beginning of 2010. It is the first time Japanese companies have been involved in developing heavy oil in Venezuela.

I hope that in the days ahead we may see many more examples of bilateral cooperation. The potential of our economic relations can be fully realized with a further improvement of Venezuela's business environment.

On this auspicious occasion of the anniversary of the nation's independence, I wish Venezuela and its people peace and prosperity.



Incredible height: Angel Falls in Canaima National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the world's tallest waterfall at 979 meters. EMBASSY OF VENEZUELA

## Mutual cultural festivals bring nations closer

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 memorable bicentennial of the Proclamation of Independence and the 199th Anniversary of Independence.

Japan and Venezuela maintain a traditionally friendly relationship and in recent years there has been a growing momentum by both countries to strengthen the bilateral relations further, as is shown by the decision of the government of Venezuela to adopt the Japanese ISDB-T system as the standard of digital satellite broadcasting in October last year as well as by the acquisition of rights of exploitation in the Orinoco oil

field by Japanese companies following the international bidding held at the beginning of this year. The acquisition is of significant importance for Japanese energy security in diversifying its supply sources of crude oil as Japan's dependence on the Middle East for supply reaches almost 90 percent.

Our future relations look promising when we consider that both Japan and Venezuela have enormous potential to expand the mutually complementary economic relations supported by Venezuela's rich energy and mineral resources and Japan's technology and capital. It is also encouraging that the mutual cooperation will promote tourism between the two countries. Venezuela has a diverse geography and has many attractions such as white sand beaches and crystalline waters; Gran Sabana, the great plain with flat-top mountains called Tepuy; Angel Falls, the highest cataract in the world; and Bolivar Peak.

We have also seen in recent years a growing academic cooperation between universities of both countries as well as an increase in Japan studies in Venezuelan universities. Contrary to the general

image of Venezuela held by the Japanese, Venezuelans have a very strong interest in Japanese culture and there are many institutions and associations in Venezuela which promote Japanese culture to Venezuelans. Japanese popular culture also plays an important role in attracting Venezuelan youths to Japan and increasing their fascination for Japanese culture and interest in learning the Japanese language.

It is indeed a pleasure to see that there is now a better understanding between the two nations, and through the efforts on both sides to hold a Cultural Festival of Venezuela in Japan and a Cultural Festival of Japan in Venezuela, the two nations are now closer to each other.

Finally, 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.



Spectacular: Los Roques Archipelago National Park is the largest marine park in the Caribbean Sea. EMBASSY OF VENEZUELA

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