

# Guatemala independence day

## Further deepening our bilateral relations

Byron Escobedo  
AMBASSADOR OF GUATEMALA

For the Republic of Guatemala, Sept. 15 is a historic date, when the Guatemalan state decided to break away from Spain in 1821, being at that time the Captaincy General of Guatemala of the Viceroyalty of New Spain.

With nearly 200 years of independence, Guatemala is a country with 23 ethnic groups, of which 22 are of Mayan origin and the other is Garifuna of African origin, who live in an area of 108,000 sq. km. The nation of beautiful scenery borders Mexico, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador.

Guatemala has been called the land of eternal spring not only for its geographical position but also for its 33 wonderful volcanoes, its rivers and lakes, and for its climate, which is very cool all year. Furthermore, it is also bordered by the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

Guatemala has been a country blessed by nature in her womb.

The Mayan civilization was built in Guatemala, so 65 percent of its population is indigenous, an ancestral legacy of that civilization.

Currently, in the north in the department of Petén, scientists are working with experts from around the world to preserve and protect the pyramid of El Mirador, which in terms of volume is the world's largest pyramid.

The Mayan civilization was located on very fertile lands that produce high-quality coffee in the world, gum, sesame seeds, rum, ornamental plants — products we have been exporting to Japan for several years.

As ambassador, I represent nearly 14 million Guatemalans and, since my arrival in this friendly nation in May 2008 presenting my credentials to His

Majesty the Emperor Akihito, seek to reaffirm the ties of friendship and cooperation we have been keeping for 76 years.

As part of this celebration of our diplomatic relations, the president of Guatemala visited Japan in October 2010. Later, the deputy foreign minister of Japan visited our country in December 2010.

In Japan, there are approxi-

mately 400 Guatemalans who have been welcomed by the Japanese people to integrate into Japanese society. Thus, we cast our bonds of friendship and cooperation through blood ties.

In Guatemala, Japanese people have been living there for many years, with the aim of increasing trade and cultural relations among our peoples, which has resulted in such increases.



**Friendship:** Ambassador Byron Escobedo speaks at a meeting of the Kiwanis Club of Sapporo on Aug. 24. EMBASSY OF GUATEMALA



**Ancient:** Tikal is a UNESCO World Heritage site that was the largest urban center of Maya civilization. GUATEMALA TOURIST BOARD

During my tenure as ambassador, I have had the opportunity to observe the enormous interest of the Japanese people to intensify our bilateral relations. I have had the opportunity to exchange views with academics, politicians, businessmen, students and journalists to build bridges that allow us to deepen the relation between the countries.

With that in mind, our government, during my tenure as a diplomat, decided to open the Honorary Consulate in Sapporo

and the Honorary Consulate in Kyoto, in addition to the one established five years ago in Yokohama. All are led by prominent members of Japanese society who have been promoting the economic, cultural, social and political ties between the two countries.

After almost 200 years of our independence as a republic, we hope for the growth of our ties of friendship and cooperation with the international community and especially with the brother

people of Japan.

On March 11 this year, the Guatemalan people were shocked by the events as a result of the natural disasters in the northeast of Japan, and immediately there were expressions of solidarity from Guatemalans (individuals, companies and the government) trying to alleviate the pain of people from the Tohoku region.

Long life to Guatemala! And long life to the people and government of Japan!

**Congratulations**  
**to the People of the Republic of Guatemala**  
**on the 190th Anniversary of Their Independence Day**  
We support the Guatemalan coffee industry through our coffee concern.

**Takeshige Ogawa**  
Honorary Consul of the Republic of Guatemala in Yokohama  
and  
Group Representative

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