

Ecuador national day

Diverse nation hosts variety of sectors for Japanese investment

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AMBASSADOR OF ECUADOR

On Aug. 10, Ecuador commemorates its National Day, and thanks to the kind invitation of the *The Japan Times*, as ambassador of Ecuador in Japan, I avail myself of the opportunity to present my greetings to His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito, to H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, to the Japanese people and to my fellow Ecuadorians living in Japan.



Ecuador traces its origins back to 20,000 BC. Its shores, with beautiful and vast beaches, have served for navigation, contact and commerce between Ecuador and Japan for more than a century.

My country has one of the richest mega-biodiversity in the world, preserved in 40 national parks and natural reserves. Our four ecological regions distributed in the Andes, the Amazon Basin, the Pacific Coast and the Galapagos Islands, contains the largest number of

native species and endemic fauna and flora in the world.

As a result of the mix of races and the cultural syncretism present since the mid-16th century, and under Spanish, Italian, Flemish and Moorish influences, the city of Quito developed a rich artistic and architectural style, known as “the School of Quito” or “Escuela Quiteña”. Within these artistic and architectural movements, there is a harmonious combination of American and European legacies that made Quito become, in 1975, the first city on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Some years later the city of Cuenca, located in the center of the country, received a similar distinction.

The national government of President Rafael Correa, who began his second constitutional term on May 24, has promoted deep changes in order to transform the country and build a democratic, inclusive, just and fair society in the framework of a new constitution that was approved by Ecuadorians in 2008, and the National Plan of Good Living.

Ecuador maintains friendly relations with every country in



Middle of the world: This 30-meter-tall national landmark in Quito marks the location of the equator. EMBASSY OF ECUADOR

the world, and through its citizen diplomacy for human development and an active participation in international and regional forums, promotes international integration as a mechanism of cooperation and solidarity to collectively achieve the “Buen Vivir” or “Good Living” — an original concept of the Andean nations; progressive development of international rights; strengthening the mechanisms for dispute settlement; acknowledgement of the asymmetries between countries; the application of the principle

of special and differential treatment between nations beyond the commercial components; and promoting human rights and protecting the freedom of press and speech. Furthermore, it promotes the establishment of a new international financial architecture and reforms of archaic institutions, such as the U.N. Security Council.

It should be noted, moreover, that the political constitution consecrates Ecuador as a territory of peace, a principle that has been also adopted by the States of the Union of South Ameri-

can Nations (UNASUR), forbidding the development and use of weapons of mass destruction and prohibiting the installations of foreign military bases on its territory. The promotion of the universal citizenship and the free movement of all the inhabitants of the world, in relation to the rights of the immigrants and their families, are key points of Ecuadorian foreign policy.

The Yasuni-ITT Initiative aims to preserve forever the natural reserve, declared by UNESCO as a part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which means forgoing 846 million barrels of underground petroleum, 20 percent of the proved reserves of the country, equaling the emission of 407 metric tons of carbon dioxide. This project is one of the guideline principles in environmental government policies and is Ecuador’s contribution to the worldwide biodiversity conservation efforts, to mitigate the climate change of the planet and to promote the equitable development in the country.

The relations between Ecuador and Japan have been

mainly characterized by having a friendly political and diplomatic dialogue, strengthened by working visits to Tokyo and Quito, respectively, by President Correa and Vice President Lenin Moreno; the members of the Parliamentary Friendship Group Ecuador-Japan of the Ecuadorean National Assembly; the former Prime Minister H.E. Taro Aso; several ministers of state and senior government officials; as well as the participation of high-ranking Japanese delegations to attend the Presidential Possession Ceremonies in Ecuador, in 2007 and 2013.

In 2018, we will be commemorating the first centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and its preparation has begun through the bilateral mechanism for dialogue and political consultations that will meet on the last trimester of this year.

The commercial exchange of products such as petroleum and petroleum products represent the 75 percent of the bilateral trade, and products such as fishmeal; bananas; shrimps; flowers; broc-

coli; coffee; cocoa; fruits, juices and preserves; tuna, among others, represent the other 25 percent, which totaled \$653 million in 2012.

Multiple sectors of interest for both countries have been identified, such as energy, petroleum, fisheries and telecommunications — the latter of great relevance due to the recent adoption in Ecuador of the Japanese/Brazilian digital television system — which are of major potential for the public and private sectors of Japan, as it could represent direct investments for mutual benefits. It’s especially relevant the earlier participation of the Mitsubishi and Chiyoda corporations in the development of oil infrastructure projects, and

the revival of its operations in Ecuador by Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI), for first time in 19 years, as a result of political stability and sustained economic growth, that are today Ecuador’s characteristics.

Reiterating my special greetings on this significant date, I express my best wishes of prosperity and health to His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito, and to the Imperial family, to the people of Japan, and to the honorable Japanese government, and I renew the decision of the government of Ecuador and its diplomatic mission in Tokyo to strengthen even more the friendly relations and cooperation that exist between both nations.

**Congratulations
to the People of Ecuador
on the 204th Anniversary of Their Independence**

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